О. Уайльд, Ф. С. Фицджеральд
Д. Голсуорси, В. Ирвинг

O. Wilde, F. S. Fitzgerald,
J. Galsworthy, W. Irving

Любимые повести на английском

Best Short Novels

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Annotation

Чтение оригинальных произведений – простой и действенный способ погрузиться в языковую среду и совершенствоваться в иностранном языке. Серия «Бестселлер на все времена» – это возможность улучшить свой английский, читая лучшие произведения англоязычных авторов, любимые миллионами читателей. Для лучшего понимания текста в книгу включены краткий словарь и комментарии, поясняющие языковые и лингвострановедческие вопросы, исторические и культурные реалии описываемой эпохи. В этой книге собраны блистательные повести выдающихся мастеров англоязычной прозы – Оскара Уайльда, Фрэнсиса Скотта Фицджеральда, Вашингтона Ирвинга и Джона Голсуорси. Они не похожи одна на другую: это загадочная история о Сонной лощине и мистическое происшествие в Кентервильском имении, фантасмагорический сюжет с огромным алмазом и вдохновенный гимн жизни, любви и красоте. Но все они увлекут читателя оригинальным сюжетом и помогут улучшить свой английский. Книга предназначена для тех, кто изучает английский язык на продолжающем или продвинутом уровне и стремится к его совершенствованию.

- О. Уайльд, Ф. С. Фицджеральд Д. Голсуорси, В. Ирвинг / O. Wilde, F. S. Fitzgerald, J. Galsworthy, W. Irving
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* * *

Читайте «Бестселлер на все времена» – погрузитесь в языковую среду с лучшими произведениями любимых авторов!

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А самое главное – не прекращать изучение языка. Это может быть чтение оригинальной литературы. Любите читать про любовь – читайте про любовь, любите фантастику – читайте фантастику. Но читайте обязательно!»

Н. А. Бонк, лингвист, педагог,

автор наиболее популярных в России

учебников английского языка

Francis Scott Fitzgerald
The Diamond as Big as The Ritz

I

John T. Unger came from a family that had been well known in Hades[1] – a small town on the Mississippi River[2] – for several generations.

John's father had held the amateur golf championship through many a heated contest; Mrs. Unger was known 'from hot-box to hot-bed,' as the local phrase went, for her political addresses; and young John T. Unger, who had just turned sixteen, had danced all the latest dances from New York before he put on long trousers. And now, for a certain time, he was to be away from home. That respect for a New England[3] education which is the bane of all provincial places, which drains them yearly of their most promising young men, had seized upon his parents. Nothing would suit them but that he should go to St. Midas'[4] School near Boston[5] – Hades was too small to hold their darling and gifted son.

Now in Hades – as you know if you ever have been there – the names of the more fashionable preparatory schools and colleges mean very little. The inhabitants have been so long out of the world that, though they make a show of keeping up to date in dress and manners and literature, they depend to a great extent on hearsay, and a function that in Hades would be considered elaborate would doubtless be hailed by a Chicago[6] – beef-princess as 'perhaps a little tacky.'

John T. Unger was on the eve of departure. Mrs. Unger, with maternal fatuity, packed his trunks full of linen suits and electric fans, and Mr. Unger presented his son with an asbestos pocket-book stuffed with money.

'Remember, you are always welcome here,' he said. 'You can be sure, boy, that we'll keep the home fires burning.'

'I know,' answered John huskily.

'Don't forget who you are and where you come from,' continued his father proudly, 'and you can do nothing to harm you. You are an Unger – from Hades.'

So the old man and the young shook hands and John walked away with tears streaming from his eyes. Ten minutes later he had passed outside the city limits, and he stopped to glance back for the last time. Over the gates the old-fashioned Victorian[7] motto seemed strangely attractive to him. His father had tried time and time again to have it changed to something with a little more push and verve about it, such as 'Hades – Your Opportunity,' or else a plain 'Welcome' sign set over a hearty handshake pricked out in electric lights. The old motto was a little depressing, Mr. Unger had thought – but now…

So John took his look and then set his face resolutely toward his

destination. And, as he turned away, the lights of Hades against the sky seemed full of a warm and passionate beauty.

St. Midas' School is half an hour from Boston in a Rolls-Pierce motorcar. The actual distance will never be known, for no one, except John T. Unger, had ever arrived there save in a Rolls-Pierce and probably no one ever will again. St. Midas' is the most expensive and the most exclusive boys' preparatory school[8] in the world.

John's first two years there passed pleasantly. The fathers of all the boys were money-kings and John spent his summers visiting at fashionable resorts. While he was very fond of all the boys he visited, their fathers struck him as being much of a piece, and in his boyish way he often wondered at their exceeding sameness. When he told them where his home was they would ask jovially, 'Pretty hot down there?' and John would muster a faint smile and answer, 'It certainly is.' His response would have been heartier had they not all made this joke – at best varying it with, 'Is it hot enough for you down there?' which he hated just as much.

In the middle of his second year at school, a quiet, handsome boy named Percy Washington had been put in John's form. The newcomer was pleasant in his manner and exceedingly well dressed even for St. Midas', but for some reason he kept aloof from the other boys. The only person with whom he was intimate was John T. Unger, but even to John he was entirely uncommunicative concerning his home or his family. That he was wealthy went without saying, but beyond a few such deductions John knew little of his friend, so it promised rich confectionery for his curiosity when Percy invited him to spend the summer at his home 'in the West.' He accepted, without hesitation.

It was only when they were in the train that Percy became, for the first time, rather communicative. One day while they were eating lunch in the dining-car and discussing the imperfect characters of several of the boys at school, Percy suddenly changed his tone and made an abrupt remark.

'My father,' he said, 'is by far the richest man in the world.'

'Oh,' said John, politely. He could think of no answer to make to this confidence. He considered 'That's very nice,' but it sounded hollow and was on the point of saying, 'Really?' but refrained since it would seem to question Percy's statement. And such an astounding statement could scarcely be questioned.

'By far the richest,' repeated Percy.

'I was reading in the 'World Almanac,'' began John, 'that there was one man in America with an income of over five million a year and four men with incomes of over three million a year, and – '

'Oh, they're nothing.' Percy's mouth was a half-moon of scorn. 'Catchpenny capitalists, financial small-fry, petty merchants and

money-lenders. My father could buy them out and not know he'd done it.'

'But how does he – '

'Why haven't they put down *his* income tax? Because he doesn't pay any. At least he pays a little one – but he doesn't pay any on his *real* income.'

'He must be very rich,' said John simply. 'I'm glad. I like very rich people.

'The richer a fella is, the better I like him.' There was a look of passionate frankness upon his dark face. 'I visited the Schnlitzer-Murphys last Easter. Vivian Schnlitzer-Murphy had rubies as big as hen's eggs, and sapphires that were like globes with lights inside them – '

'I love jewels,' agreed Percy enthusiastically. 'Of course I wouldn't want any one at school to know about it, but I've got quite a collection myself. I used to collect them instead of stamps.'

'And diamonds,' continued John eagerly. 'The Schnlit-zer-Murphys had diamonds as big as walnuts – '

'That's nothing.' Percy had leaned forward and dropped his voice to a low whisper. 'That's nothing at all. My father has a diamond bigger than the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.[9]'

II

The Montana[10] sunset lay between two mountains like a gigantic bruise from which dark arteries spread themselves over a poisoned sky. An immense distance under the sky crouched the village of Fish, minute, dismal, and forgotten. There were twelve men, so it was said, in the village of Fish, twelve somber and inexplicable souls who sucked a lean milk from the almost literally bare rock upon which a mysterious populatory force had begotten them. They had become a race apart, these twelve men of Fish, like some species developed by an early whim of nature, which on second thought had abandoned them to struggle and extermination.

Out of the blue-black bruise in the distance crept a long line of moving lights upon the desolation of the land, and the twelve men of Fish gathered like ghosts at the shanty depot to watch the passing of the seven o'clock train, the Transcontinental Express from Chicago. Six times or so a year the Transcontinental Express, through some inconceivable jurisdiction, stopped at the village of Fish, and when this occurred a figure or so would disembark, mount into a buggy that always appeared from out of the dusk, and drive off toward the bruised sunset. The observation of this pointless and preposterous phenomenon had become a sort of cult among the men of Fish. To observe, that was all; there remained in them none of the vital quality of illusion which would make them wonder or speculate, else a religion might have grown up around these mysterious visitations. But the men of Fish were beyond all religion – the barest and most savage tenets of even Christianity could gain no foothold on that barren rock – so there was no altar, no priest, no sacrifice; only each night at seven the silent concourse by the shanty depot, a congregation who lifted up a prayer of dim, anaemic wonder.

On this June night, the Great Brakeman,[11] whom, had they deified any one, they might well have chosen as their celestial protagonist,[12] had ordained that the seven o'clock train should leave its human (or inhuman) deposit at Fish. At two minutes after seven Percy Washington and John T. Unger disembarked, hurried past the spellbound, the agape, the fearsome eyes of the twelve men of Fish, mounted into a buggy which had obviously appeared from nowhere, and drove away.

After half an hour, when the twilight had coagulated into dark, the silent negro who was driving the buggy hailed an opaque body somewhere ahead of them in the gloom. In response to his cry, it turned upon them a luminous disk which regarded them like a malignant eye out of the unfathomable night. As they came closer,

John saw that it was the tail-light of an immense automobile, larger and more magnificent than any he had ever seen. Its body was of gleaming metal richer than nickel and lighter than silver, and the hubs of the wheels were studded with iridescent geometric figures of green and yellow – John did not dare to guess whether they were glass or jewel.

Two negroes, dressed in glittering livery such as one sees in pictures of royal processions in London, were standing at attention beside the car and as the two young men dismounted from the buggy they were greeted in some language which the guest could not understand, but which seemed to be an extreme form of the Southern negro's dialect.

'Get in,' said Percy to his friend, as their trunks were tossed to the ebony roof of the limousine. 'Sorry we had to bring you this far in that buggy, but of course it wouldn't do for the people on the train or those Godforsaken fellas in Fish to see this automobile.'

'Gosh! What a car!' This ejaculation was provoked by its interior. John saw that the upholstery consisted of a thousand minute and exquisite tapestries of silk, woven with jewels and embroideries, and set upon a background of cloth of gold. The two armchair seats in which the boys luxuriated were covered with stuff that resembled duvetyn, but seemed woven in numberless colors of the ends of ostrich feathers.

'What a car!' cried John again in amazement.

'This thing?' Percy laughed. 'Why, it's just an old junk we use for a station wagon.'

By this time they were gliding along through the darkness toward the break between the two mountains.

'We'll be there in an hour and a half,' said Percy, looking at the clock. 'I may as well tell you it's not going to be like anything you ever saw before.'

If the car was any indication of what John would see, he was prepared to be astonished indeed. The simple piety prevalent in Hades has the earnest worship of and respect for riches as the first article of its creed – had John felt otherwise than radiantly humble before them, his parents would have turned away in horror at the blasphemy.

They had now reached and were entering the break between the two mountains and almost immediately the way became much rougher.

'If the moon shone down here, you'd see that we're in a big gulch,' said Percy, trying to peer out of the window. He spoke a few words into the mouthpiece and immediately the footman turned on a search-light and swept the hillsides with an immense beam.

'Rocky, you see. An ordinary car would be knocked to pieces in

half an hour. In fact, it'd take a tank to navigate it unless you knew the way. You notice we're going uphill now. '

They were obviously ascending, and within a few minutes the car was crossing a high rise, where they caught a glimpse of a pale moon newly risen in the distance. The car stopped suddenly and several figures took shape out of the dark beside it – these were negroes also. Again the two young men were saluted in the same dimly recognizable dialect; then the negroes set to work and four immense cables dangling from overhead were attached with hooks to the hubs of the great jeweled wheels. At a resounding 'Hey-yah!' John felt the car being lifted slowly from the ground – up and up – clear of the tallest rocks on both sides – then higher, until he could see a wavy, moonlit valley stretched out before him in sharp contrast to the quagmire of rocks that they had just left. Only on one side was there still rock – and then suddenly there was no rock beside them or anywhere around.

It was apparent that they had surmounted some immense knife-blade of stone, projecting perpendicularly into the air. In a moment they were going down again, and finally with a soft bump they were landed upon the smooth earth.

'The worst is over,' said Percy, squinting out the window. 'It's only five miles from here, and our own road – tapestry brick – all the way. This belongs to us. This is where the United States ends, father says.'

'Are we in Canada?'

'We are not. We're in the middle of the Montana Rockies.[13] But you are now on the only five square miles of land in the country that's never been surveyed.'

'Why hasn't it? Did they forget it?'

'No,' said Percy, grinning, 'they tried to do it three times. The first time my grandfather corrupted a whole department of the State survey; the second time he had the official maps of the United States tinkered with – that held them for fifteen years. The last time was harder. My father fixed it so that their compasses were in the strongest magnetic field ever artificially set up. He had a whole set of surveying instruments made with a slight defection that would allow for this territory not to appear, and he substituted them for the ones that were to be used. Then he had a river deflected and he had what looked like a village built up on its banks – so that they'd see it, and think it was a town ten miles farther up the valley. There's only one thing my father's afraid of,' he concluded, 'only one thing in the world that could be used to find us out.'

'What's that?'

Percy sank his voice to a whisper.

‘Aeroplanes,’ he breathed. ‘We’ve got half a dozen anti-aircraft guns and we’ve arranged it so far – but there’ve been a few deaths and a great many prisoners. Not that we mind *that*, you know, father and I, but it upsets mother and the girls, and there’s always the chance that some time we won’t be able to arrange it.’

Shreds and tatters of chinchilla, courtesy clouds in the green moon’s heaven, were passing the green moon like precious Eastern stuffs paraded for the inspection of some Tartar Khan. It seemed to John that it was day, and that he was looking at some lads sailing above him in the air, showering down tracts and patent medicine circulars, with their messages of hope for despairing, rockbound hamlets. It seemed to him that he could see them look down out of the clouds and stare – and stare at whatever there was to stare at in this place whither he was bound – What then? Were they induced to land by some insidious device there to be immured far from patent medicines and from tracts until the judgment day – or, should they fail to fall into the trap, did a quick puff of smoke and the sharp round of a splitting shell bring them drooping to earth – and ‘upset’ Percy’s mother and sisters. John shook his head and the wraith of a hollow laugh issued silently from his parted lips. What desperate transaction lay hidden here? What a moral expedient of a bizarre Croesus?[14] What terrible and golden mystery?…

The chinchilla clouds had drifted past now and outside the Montana night was bright as day. The tapestry brick of the road was smooth to the tread of the great tires as they rounded a still, moonlit lake; they passed into darkness for a moment, a pine grove, pungent and cool, then they came out into a broad avenue of lawn and John’s exclamation of pleasure was simultaneous with Percy’s taciturn ‘We’re home.’

Full in the light of the stars, an exquisite château[15] rose from the borders of the lake, climbed in marble radiance half the height of an adjoining mountain, then melted in grace, in perfect symmetry, in translucent feminine languor, into the massed darkness of a forest of pine. The many towers, the slender tracery of the sloping parapets, the chiselled wonder of a thousand yellow windows with their oblongs and hectagons and triangles of golden light, the shattered softness of the intersecting planes of star-shine and blue shade, all trembled on John’s spirit like a chord of music. On one of the towers, the tallest, the blackest at its base, an arrangement of exterior lights at the top made a sort of floating fairyland – and as John gazed up in warm enchantment the faint acciaccare[16] sound of violins drifted down in a rococo[17] harmony that was like nothing he had ever heard before. Then in a moment the car stopped before wide, high marble steps around which the night air was fragrant with a host of flowers. At the

top of the steps two great doors swung silently open and amber light flooded out upon the darkness, silhouetting the figure of an exquisite lady with black, high-piled hair, who held out her arms toward them.

'Mother,' Percy was saying, 'this is my friend, John Unger, from Hades.'

Afterward John remembered that first night as a daze of many colors, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love, and of the beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces. There was a white-haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a crystal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dressed like Titania[18] with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic[19] conception of the ultimate prism – ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until, lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream.

Through a maze of these rooms the two boys wandered. Sometimes the floor under their feet would flame in brilliant patterns from lighting below, patterns of barbaric clashing colors, of pastel delicacy, of sheer whiteness, or of subtle and intricate mosaic, surely from some mosque on the Adriatic Sea.[20] Sometimes beneath layers of thick crystal he would see blue or green water swirling, inhabited by vivid fish and growths of rainbow foliage. Then they would be treading on furs of every texture and color or along corridors of palest ivory, unbroken as though carved complete from the gigantic tusks of dinosaurs extinct before the age of man…

Then a hazily remembered transition, and they were at dinner – where each plate was of two almost imperceptible layers of solid diamond between which was curiously worked a filigree of emerald design, a shaving sliced from green air. Music, plangent and unobtrusive, drifted down through far corridors – his chair, feathered and curved insidiously to his back, seemed to engulf and overpower him as he drank his first glass of port. He tried drowsily to answer a question that had been asked him, but the honeyed luxury that clasped his body added to the illusion of sleep – jewels, fabrics, wines, and metals blurred before his eyes into a sweet mist…

'Yes,' he replied with a polite effort, 'it certainly is hot enough for me down there.'

He managed to add a ghostly laugh; then, without movement, without resistance, he seemed to float off and away, leaving an iced dessert that was pink as a dream… He fell asleep.

When he awoke he knew that several hours had passed. He was in

a great quiet room with ebony walls and a dull illumination that was too faint, too subtle, to be called a light. His young host was standing over him.

'You fell asleep at dinner,' Percy was saying. 'I nearly did, too – it was such a treat to be comfortable again after this year of school. Servants undressed and bathed you while you were sleeping.'

'Is this a bed or a cloud?' sighed John. 'Percy, Percy – before you go, I want to apologize.'

'For what?'

'For doubting you when you said you had a diamond as big as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.'

Percy smiled.

'I thought you didn't believe me. It's that mountain, you know.'

'What mountain?'

'The mountain the château rests on. It's not very big, for a mountain. But except about fifty feet of sod and gravel on top it's solid diamond. *One* diamond, one cubic mile without a flaw. Aren't you listening? Say – '

But John T. Unger had again fallen asleep.

III

Morning. As he awoke he perceived drowsily that the room had at the same moment become dense with sunlight. The ebony panels of one wall had slid aside on a sort of track, leaving his chamber half open to the day. A large negro in a white uniform stood beside his bed.

'Good evening,' muttered John, summoning his brains from the wild places.

'Good morning, sir. Are you ready for your bath, sir? Oh, don't get up – I'll put you in, if you'll just unbutton your pajamas – there. Thank you, sir.'

John lay quietly as his pajamas were removed – he was amused and delighted; he expected to be lifted like a child by this black Gargantua who was tending him, but nothing of the sort happened; instead he felt the bed tilt up slowly on its side – he began to roll, startled at first, in the direction of the wall, but when he reached the wall its drapery gave way, and sliding two yards farther down a fleecy incline he plumped gently into water the same temperature as his body.

He looked about him. The runway or rollway on which he had arrived had folded gently back into place. He had been projected into another chamber and was sitting in a sunken bath with his head just above the level of the floor. All about him, lining the walls of the room and the sides and bottom of the bath itself, was a blue aquarium, and gazing through the crystal surface on which he sat, he could see fish swimming among amber lights and even gliding without curiosity past his outstretched toes, which were separated from them only by the thickness of the crystal. From overhead, sunlight came down through sea-green glass.

'I suppose, sir, that you'd like hot rosewater and soapsuds this morning, sir – and perhaps cold salt water to finish.'

The negro was standing beside him.

'Yes,' agreed John, smiling inanely, 'as you please.' Any idea of ordering this bath according to his own meager standards of living would have been priggish and not a little wicked.

The negro pressed a button and a warm rain began to fall, apparently from overhead, but really, so John discovered after a moment, from a fountain arrangement near by. The water turned to a pale rose color and jets of liquid soap spurted into it from four miniature walrus heads at the corners of the bath. In a moment a dozen little paddle-wheels, fixed to the sides, had churned the mixture into a radiant rainbow of pink foam which enveloped him softly with

its delicious lightness, and burst in shining, rosy bubbles here and there about him.

'Shall I turn on the moving-picture machine, sir?' suggested the negro deferentially. 'There's a good one-reel comedy in this machine to-day, or can put in a serious piece in a moment, if you prefer it.'

'No, thanks,' answered John, politely but firmly. He was enjoying his bath too much to desire any distraction. But distraction came. In a moment he was listening intently to the sound of flutes from just outside, flutes ripping a melody that was like a waterfall, cool and green as the room itself, accompanying a frothy piccolo,[21] in play more fragile than the lace of suds that covered and charmed him.

After a cold salt-water bracer and a cold fresh finish, he stepped out and into a fleecy robe, and upon a couch covered with the same material he was rubbed with oil, alcohol, and spice. Later he sat in a voluptuous chair while he was shaved and his hair was trimmed.

'Mr. Percy is waiting in your sitting-room,' said the negro, when these operations were finished. 'My name is Gygsum, Mr. Unger, sir. I am to see to Mr. Unger every morning.'

John walked out into the brisk sunshine of his living-room, where he found breakfast waiting for him and Percy, gorgeous in white kid knickerbockers, smoking in an easy chair.

IV

This is a story of the Washington family as Percy sketched it for John during breakfast.

The father of the present Mr. Washington had been a Virginian, [22] a direct descendant of George Washington, [23] and Lord Baltimore. [24] At the close of the Civil War [25] he was a twenty-five-year-old Colonel with a played-out plantation and about a thousand dollars in gold.

Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington, for that was the young Colonel's name, decided to present the Virginia estate to his younger brother and go West. He selected two dozen of the most faithful blacks, who, of course, worshipped him, and bought twenty-five tickets to the West, where he intended to take out land in their names and start a sheep and cattle ranch.

When he had been in Montana for less than a month and things were going very poorly indeed, he stumbled on his great discovery. He had lost his way when riding in the hills, and after a day without food he began to grow hungry. As he was without his rifle, he was forced to pursue a squirrel, and in the course of the pursuit he noticed that it was carrying something shiny in its mouth. Just before it vanished into its hole – for Providence did not intend that this squirrel should alleviate his hunger – it dropped its burden. Sitting down to consider the situation Fitz-Norman's eye was caught by a gleam in the grass beside him. In ten seconds he had completely lost his appetite and gained one hundred thousand dollars. The squirrel, which had refused with annoying persistence to become food, had made him a present of a large and perfect diamond.

Late that night he found his way to camp and twelve hours later all the males among his darkies were back by the squirrel hole digging furiously at the side of the mountain. He told them he had discovered a rhinestone mine, and, as only one or two of them had ever seen even a small diamond before, they believed him, without question. When the magnitude of his discovery became apparent to him, he found himself in a quandary. The mountain was *a* diamond – it was literally nothing else but solid diamond. He filled four saddle bags full of glittering samples and started on horseback for St. Paul. [26] There he managed to dispose of half a dozen small stones – when he tried a larger one a storekeeper fainted and Fitz-Norman was arrested as a public disturber. He escaped from jail and caught the train for New York, where he sold a few medium-sized diamonds and received in exchange about two hundred thousand dollars in gold. But he did not dare to produce any exceptional gems – in fact, he left New York just

in time. Tremendous excitement had been created in jewelry circles, not so much by the size of his diamonds as by their appearance in the city from mysterious sources. Wild rumors became current that a diamond mine had been discovered in the Catskills,[27] on the Jersey[28] coast, on Long Island,[29] beneath Washington Square. Excursion trains, packed with men carrying picks and shovels, began to leave New York hourly, bound for various neighboring El Dorados. But by that time young Fitz-Norman was on his way back to Montana.

By the end of a fortnight he had estimated that the diamond in the mountain was approximately equal in quantity to all the rest of the diamonds known to exist in the world. There was no valuing it by any regular computation, however, for it was *one solid diamond* – and if it were offered for sale not only would the bottom fall out of the market, but also, if the value should vary with its size in the usual arithmetical progression, there would not be enough gold in the world to buy a tenth part of it. And what could any one do with a diamond that size?

It was an amazing predicament. He was, in one sense, the richest man that ever lived – and yet was he worth anything at all? If his secret should transpire there was no telling to what measures the Government might resort in order to prevent a panic, in gold as well as in jewels. They might take over the claim immediately and institute a monopoly.

There was no alternative – he must market his mountain in secret. He sent South for his younger brother and put him in charge of his colored following – darkies who had never realized that slavery was abolished. To make sure of this, he read them a proclamation[30] that he had composed, which announced that General Forrest had reorganized the shattered Southern armies and defeated the North in one pitched battle. The negroes believed him implicitly. They passed a vote declaring it a good thing and held revival services immediately.

Fitz-Norman himself set out for foreign parts with one hundred thousand dollars and two trunks filled with rough diamonds of all sizes. He sailed for Russia in a Chinese junk and six months after his departure from Montana he was in St. Petersburg. He took obscure lodgings and called immediately upon the court jeweller, announcing that he had a diamond for the Czar. He remained in St. Petersburg for two weeks, in constant danger of being murdered, living from lodging to lodging, and afraid to visit his trunks more than three or four times during the whole fortnight.

On his promise to return in a year with larger and finer stones, he was allowed to leave for India. Before he left, however, the Court Treasurers had deposited to his credit, in American banks, the sum of fifteen million dollars – under four different aliases.[31]

He returned to America in 1868, having been gone a little over two years. He had visited the capitals of twenty-two countries and talked with five emperors, eleven kings, three princes, a shah, a khan, and a sultan. At that time Fitz-Norman estimated his own wealth at one billion dollars. One fact worked consistently against the disclosure of his secret. No one of his larger diamonds remained in the public eye for a week before being invested with a history of enough fatalities, amours, revolutions, and wars to have occupied it from the days of the first Babylonian Empire.[32]

From 1870 until his death in 1900, the history of Fitz-Norman Washington was a long epic in gold. There were side issues, of course – he evaded the surveys, he married a Virginia lady, by whom he had a single son, and he was compelled, due to a series of unfortunate complications, to murder his brother, whose unfortunate habit of drinking himself into an indiscreet stupor had several times endangered their safety. But very few other murders stained these happy years of progress and expansion.

Just before he died he changed his policy, and with all but a few million dollars of his outside wealth bought up rare minerals in bulk, which he deposited in the safety vaults of banks all over the world, marked as bric-à-brac.[33] His son, Braddock Tarleton Washington, followed this policy on an even more tensive scale. The minerals were converted into the rarest of all elements – radium – so that the equivalent of a billion dollars in gold could be placed in a receptacle no bigger than a cigar box.

When Fitz-Norman had been dead three years his son, Braddock, decided that the business had gone far enough. The amount of wealth that he and his father had taken out of the mountain was beyond all exact computation. He kept a note-book in cipher in which he set down the approximate quantity of radium in each of the thousand banks he patronized, and recorded the alias under which it was held. Then he did a very simple thing – he sealed up the mine.

He sealed up the mine. What had been taken out of it would support all the Washingtons yet to be born in unparalleled luxury for generations. His one care must be the protection of his secret, lest in the possible panic attendant on its discovery he should be reduced with all the property-holders in the world to utter poverty.

This was the family among whom John T. Unger was staying. This was the story he heard in his silver-walled living-room the morning after his arrival.

V

After breakfast, John found his way out the great marble entrance and looked curiously at the scene before him. The whole valley, from the diamond mountain to the steep granite cliff five miles away, still gave off a breath of golden haze which hovered idly above the fine sweep of lawns and lakes and gardens. Here and there clusters of elms made delicate groves of shade, contrasting strangely with the tough masses of pine forest that held the hills in a grip of dark-blue green. Even as John looked he saw three fawns in single file patter out from one clump about a half mile away and disappear with awkward gayety into the black-ribbed half-light of another. John would not have been surprised to see a goat-foot piping his way among the trees or to catch a glimpse of pink nymph[34] -skin and flying yellow hair between the greenest of the green leaves.

In some such cool hope he descended the marble steps, disturbing faintly the sleep of two silky Russian wolfhounds at the bottom, and set off along a walk of white and blue brick that seemed to lead in no particular direction.

He was enjoying himself as much as he was able. It is youth's felicity as well as its insufficiency that it can never live in the present, but must always be measuring up the day against its own radiantly imagined future – flowers and gold, girls and stars, they are only prefigurations and prophecies of that incomparable, unattainable young dream.

John rounded a soft corner where the massed rose-bushes filled the air with heavy scent, and struck off across a park toward a patch of moss under some trees. He had never lain upon moss, and he wanted to see whether it was really soft enough to justify the use of its name as an adjective. Then he saw a girl coming toward him over the grass. She was the most beautiful person he had ever seen.

She was dressed in a white little gown that came just below her knees, and a wreath of mignonettes clasped with blue slices of sapphire bound up her hair. Her pink bare feet scattered the dew before them as she came. She was younger than John – not more than sixteen.

'Hello,' she cried softly, 'I'm Kismine.'

She was much more than that to John already. He advanced toward her, scarcely moving as he drew near lest he should tread on her bare toes.

'You haven't met me,' said her soft voice. Her blue eyes added, 'Oh, but you've missed a great deal!'… 'You met my sister, Jasmine, last night. I was sick with lettuce poisoning,' went on her soft voice,

and her eyes continued, ‘and when I’m sick I’m sweet – and when I’m well.’

‘You have made an enormous impression on me,’ said John’s eyes, ‘and I’m not so slow myself’ – ‘How do you do?’ said his voice. ‘I hope you’re better this morning.’ – ‘You darling,’ added his eyes tremulously.

John observed that they had been walking along the path. On her suggestion they sat down together upon the moss, the softness of which he failed to determine.

He was critical about women. A single defect – a thick ankle, a hoarse voice, a glass eye – was enough to make him utterly indifferent. And here for the first time in his life he was beside a girl who seemed to him the incarnation of physical perfection.

‘Are you from the East?’ asked Kismine with charming interest.

‘No,’ answered John simply. ‘I’m from Hades.’

Either she had never heard of Hades, or she could think of no pleasant comment to make upon it, for she did not discuss it further.

‘I’m going East to school this fall,’ she said. ‘D’you think I’ll like it? I’m going to New York to Miss Bulge’s. It’s very strict, but you see over the weekends I’m going to live at home with the family in our New York house, because father heard that the girls had to go walking two by two.’

‘Your father wants you to be proud,’ observed John.

‘We are,’ she answered, her eyes shining with dignity. ‘None of us has ever been punished. Father said we never should be. Once when my sister Jasmine was a little girl she pushed him downstairs and he just got up and limped away.

‘Mother was – well, a little startled,’ continued Kismine, ‘when she heard that you were from – from where you are from, you know. She said that when she was a young girl – but then, you see, she’s a Spaniard and old-fashioned.’

‘Do you spend much time out here?’ asked John, to conceal the fact that he was somewhat hurt by this remark. It seemed an unkind allusion to his provincialism.

‘Percy and Jasmine and I are here every summer, but next summer Jasmine is going to Newport.[35] She’s coming out in London a year from this fall. She’ll be presented at court.’

‘Do you know,’ began John hesitantly, ‘you’re much more sophisticated than I thought you were when I first saw you?’

‘Oh, no, I’m not,’ she exclaimed hurriedly. ‘Oh, I wouldn’t think of being. I think that sophisticated young people are *terribly* common, don’t you? I’m not at all, really. If you say I am, I’m going to cry.’

She was so distressed that her lip was trembling. John was impelled to protest:

‘I didn’t mean that; I only said it to tease you.’

‘Because I wouldn’t mind if I *were*,’ she persisted. ‘but I’m *not*. I’m very innocent and girlish. I never smoke, or drink, or read anything except poetry. I know scarcely any mathematics or chemistry. I dress *very* simply – in fact, I scarcely dress at all. I think sophisticated is the last thing you can say about me. I believe that girls ought to enjoy their youths in a wholesome way.’

‘I do, too,’ said John, heartily.

Kismine was cheerful again. She smiled at him, and a still-born tear dripped from the corner of one blue eye.

‘I like you,’ she whispered, intimately. ‘Are you going to spend all your time with Percy while you’re here, or will you be nice to me? Just think – I’m absolutely fresh ground. I’ve never had a boy in love with me in all my life. I’ve never been allowed even to *see* boys alone – except Percy. I came all the way out here into this grove hoping to run into you, where the family wouldn’t be around.’

Deeply flattered, John bowed from the hips as he had been taught at dancing school in Hades.

‘We’d better go now,’ said Kismine sweetly. ‘I have to be with mother at eleven. You haven’t asked me to kiss you once. I thought boys always did that nowadays.’

John drew himself up proudly.

‘Some of them do,’ he answered, ‘but not me. Girls don’t do that sort of thing – in Hades.’

Side by side they walked back toward the house.

VI

John stood facing Mr. Braddock Washington in the full sunlight. The elder man was about forty with a proud, vacuous face, intelligent eyes, and a robust figure. In the mornings he smelt of horses – the best horses. He carried a plain walking-stick of gray birch with a single large opal for a grip. He and Percy were showing John around.

'The slaves' quarters are there.' His walking-stick indicated a cloister of marble on their left that ran in graceful Gothic along the side of the mountain. 'In my youth I was distracted for a while from the business of life by a period of absurd idealism. During that time they lived in luxury. For instance, I equipped every one of their rooms with a tile bath.'

'I suppose,' ventured John, with an ingratiating laugh, 'that they used the bathtubs to keep coal in. Mr. Schnlitzer-Murphy told me that once he – '

'The opinions of Mr. Schnlitzer-Murphy are of little importance, I should imagine,' interrupted Braddock Washington, coldly. 'My slaves did not keep coal in their bathtubs. They had orders to bathe every day, and they did. If they hadn't I might have ordered a sulphuric acid shampoo. I discontinued the baths for quite another reason. Several of them caught cold and died. Water is not good for certain races – except as a beverage.'

John laughed, and then decided to nod his head in sober agreement. Braddock Washington made him uncomfortable.

'All these negroes are descendants of the ones my father brought North with him. There are about two hundred and fifty now. You notice that they've lived so long apart from the world that their original dialect has become an almost indistinguishable patois. We bring a few of them up to speak English – my secretary and two or three of the house servants.

'This is the golf course,' he continued, as they strolled along the velvet winter grass. 'It's all a green, you see – no fairway, no rough, no hazards.'

He smiled pleasantly at John.

'Many men in the cage, father?' asked Percy suddenly.

Braddock Washington stumbled, and let forth an involuntary curse.

'One less than there should be,' he ejaculated darkly – and then added after a moment, 'We've had difficulties.'

'Mother was telling me,' exclaimed Percy, 'that Italian teacher – '

'A ghastly error,' said Braddock Washington angrily. 'But of course there's a good chance that we may have got him. Perhaps he

fell somewhere in the woods or stumbled over a cliff. And then there's always the probability that if he did get away his story wouldn't be believed. Nevertheless, I've had two dozen men looking for him in different towns around here.'

'And no luck?'

'Some. Fourteen of them reported to my agent that they'd each killed a man answering to that description, but of course it was probably only the reward they were after – '

He broke off. They had come to a large cavity in the earth about the circumference of a merry-go-round and covered by a strong iron grating. Braddock Washington beckoned to John, and pointed his cane down through the grating. John stepped to the edge and gazed. Immediately his ears were assailed by a wild clamor from below.

'Come on down to Hell!'

'Hello, kiddo, how's the air up there?'

'Hey! Throw us a rope!'

'Got an old doughnut, Buddy, or a couple of second-hand sandwiches?'

'Say, fella, if you'll push down that guy you're with, we'll show you a quick disappearance scene.'

'Paste him one for me, will you?'

It was too dark to see clearly into the pit below, but John could tell from the coarse optimism and rugged vitality of the remarks and voices that they proceeded from middle-class Americans of the more spirited type. Then Mr. Washington put out his cane and touched a button in the grass, and the scene below sprang into light.

'These are some adventurous mariners who had the misfortune to discover El Dorado,' he remarked.

Below them there had appeared a large hollow in the earth shaped like the interior of a bowl. The sides were steep and apparently of polished glass, and on its slightly concave surface stood about two dozen men clad in the half costume, half uniform, of aviators. Their upturned faces, lit with wrath with malice, with despair, with cynical humor, were covered by long growths of beard, but with the exception of a few who had pined perceptibly away, they seemed to be a well-fed, healthy lot.

Braddock Washington drew a garden chair to the edge of the pit and sat down.

'Well, how are you, boys?' he inquired genially.

A chorus of execration in which all joined except a few too dispirited to cry out, rose up into the sunny air, but Braddock Washington heard it with unruffled composure. When its last echo had died away he spoke again.

'Have you thought up a way out of your difficulty?'

From here and there among them a remark floated up.

'We decided to stay here for love!'

'Bring us up there and we'll find us a way!'

Braddock Washington waited until they were again quiet. Then he said:

'I've told you the situation. I don't want you here. I wish to heaven I'd never seen you. Your own curiosity got you here, and any time that you can think of a way out which protects me and my interests I'll be glad to consider it. But so long as you confine your efforts to digging tunnels – yes, I know about the new one you've started – you won't get very far. This isn't as hard on you as you make it out, with all your howling for the loved ones at home. If you were the type who worried much about the loved ones at home, you'd never have taken up aviation.'

A tall man moved apart from the others, and held up his hand to call his captor's attention to what he was about to say.

'Let me ask you a few questions!' he cried. 'You pretend to be a fair-minded man.'

'How absurd. How could a man of *my* position be fair-minded toward *you*? You might as well speak of a Spaniard being fair-minded toward a piece of steak.'

At this harsh observation the faces of the two dozen steaks fell, but the tall man continued:

'All right!' he cried. 'We've argued this out before. You're not a humanitarian and you're not fair-minded, but you're human – at least you say you are – and you ought to be able to put yourself in our place for long enough to think how – how – how – '

'How what?' demanded Washington, coldly.

' – how unnecessary – '

'Not to me.'

'Well, – how cruel – '

'We've covered that. Cruelty doesn't exist where self-preservation is involved. You've been soldiers; you know that. Try another.'

'Well, then, how stupid.'

'There,' admitted Washington, 'I grant you that. But try to think of an alternative. I've offered to have all or any of you painlessly executed if you wish. I've offered to have your wives, sweethearts, children, and mothers kidnapped and brought out here. I'll enlarge your place down there and feed and clothe you the rest of your lives. If there was some method of producing permanent amnesia[36] I'd have all of you operated on and released immediately, somewhere outside of my preserves. But that's as far as my ideas go.'

'How about trusting us not to peach on you?' cried some one.

'You don't proffer that suggestion seriously,' said Washington,

with an expression of scorn. ‘I did take out one man to teach my daughter Italian. Last week he got away.’

A wild yell of jubilation went up suddenly from two dozen throats and a pandemonium of joy ensued. The prisoners clog-danced and cheered and yodled and wrestled with one another in a sudden uprush of animal spirits. They even ran up the glass sides of the bowl as far as they could, and slid back to the bottom upon the natural cushions of their bodies. The tall man started a song in which they all joined —

‘oh, we’ll hang the Kaiser
on a sour apple tree – ’

Braddock Washington sat in inscrutable silence until the song was over. ‘You see,’ he remarked, when he could gain a modicum of attention. ‘I bear you no ill-will. I like to see you enjoying yourselves. That’s why I didn’t tell you the whole story at once. The man – what was his name? Critchtichiello? – was shot by some of my agents in fourteen different places.’

Not guessing that the places referred to were cities, the tumult of rejoicing subsided immediately.

‘Nevertheless,’ cried Washington with a touch of anger, ‘he tried to run away. Do you expect me to take chances with any of you after an experience like that?’

Again a series of ejaculations went up.

‘Sure!’

‘Would your daughter like to learn Chinese?’

‘Hey, I can speak Italian! My mother was a wop.[37]’

‘Maybe she’d like t’learna speak N’Yawk!’

‘If she’s the little one with the big blue eyes I can teach her a lot of things better than Italian.’

‘I know some Irish songs – and I could hammer brass once’t.’

Mr. Washington reached forward suddenly with his cane and pushed the button in the grass so that the picture below went out instantly, and there remained only that great dark mouth covered dismally with the black teeth of the grating.

‘Hey!’ called a single voice from below, ‘you ain’t goin’ away without givin’ us your blessing?’

But Mr. Washington, followed by the two boys, was already strolling on toward the ninth hole of the golf course, as though the pit and its contents were no more than a hazard over which his facile iron had triumphed with ease.

VII

July under the lee of the diamond mountain was a month of blanket nights and of warm, glowing days. John and Kismine were in love. He did not know that the little gold football *(*inscribed with the legend *Pro deo et patria et St. Midas*[38]*)* which he had given her rested on a platinum chain next to her bosom. But it did. And she for her part was not aware that a large sapphire which had dropped one day from her simple coiffure was stowed away tenderly in John's jewel box.

Late one afternoon when the ruby and ermine music room was quiet, they spent an hour there together. He held her hand and she gave him such a look that he whispered her name aloud. She bent toward him – then hesitated.

'Did you say "Kismine"?' she asked softly, 'or – '

She had wanted to be sure. She thought she might have misunderstood.

Neither of them had ever kissed before, but in the course of an hour it seemed to make little difference.

The afternoon drifted away. That night when a last breath of music drifted down from the highest tower, they each lay awake, happily dreaming over the separate minutes of the day. They had decided to be married as soon as possible.

VIII

Every day Mr. Washington and the two young men went hunting or fishing in the deep forests or played golf around the somnolent course – games which John diplomatically allowed his host to win – or swam in the mountain coolness of the lake. John found Mr. Washington a somewhat exacting personality – utterly uninterested in any ideas or opinions except his own. Mrs. Washington was aloof and reserved at all times. She was apparently indifferent to her two daughters, and entirely absorbed in her son Percy, with whom she held interminable conversations in rapid Spanish at dinner.

Jasmine, the elder daughter, resembled Kismine in appearance – except that she was somewhat bow-legged, and terminated in large hands and feet – but was utterly unlike her in temperament. Her favorite books had to do with poor girls who kept house for widowed fathers. John learned from Kismine that Jasmine had never recovered from the shock and disappointment caused her by the termination of the World War, just as she was about to start for Europe as a canteen expert. She had even pined away for a time, and Braddock Washington had taken steps to promote a new war in the Balkans[39] – but she had seen a photograph of some wounded Serbian[40] soldiers and lost interest in the whole proceedings. But Percy and Kismine seemed to have inherited the arrogant attitude in all its harsh magnificence from their father. A chaste and consistent selfishness ran like a pattern through their every idea.

John was enchanted by the wonders of the château and the valley. Braddock Washington, so Percy told him, had caused to be kidnapped a landscape gardener, an architect, a designer of state settings, and a French decadent poet left over from the last century. He had put his entire force of negroes at their disposal, guaranteed to supply them with any materials that the world could offer, and left them to work out some ideas of their own. But one by one they had shown their uselessness. The decadent poet had at once begun bewailing his separation from the boulevards in spring – he made some vague remarks about spices, apes, and ivories, but said nothing that was of any practical value. The stage designer on his part wanted to make the whole valley a series of tricks and sensational effects – a state of things that the Washingtons would soon have grown tired of. And as for the architect and the landscape gardener, they thought only in terms of convention. They must make this like this and that like that.

But they had, at least, solved the problem of what was to be done with them – they all went mad early one morning after spending the

night in a single room trying to agree upon the location of a fountain, and were now confined comfortably in an insane asylum at Westport, Connecticut.

'But,' inquired John curiously, 'who did plan all your wonderful reception rooms and halls, and approaches and bathrooms —?'

'Well,' answered Percy, 'I blush to tell you, but it was a moving-picture fella. He was the only man we found who was used to playing with an unlimited amount of money, though he did tuck his napkin in his collar and couldn't read or write.'

As August drew to a close John began to regret that he must soon go back to school. He and Kismine had decided to elope the following June.

'It would be nicer to be married here,' Kismine confessed, 'but of course I could never get father's permission to marry you at all. Next to that I'd rather elope. It's terrible for wealthy people to be married in America at present – they always have to send out bulletins to the press saying that they're going to be married in remnants, when what they mean is just a peck of old second-hand pearls and some used lace worn once by the Empress Eugénie.[41]'

'I know,' agreed John fervently. 'When I was visiting the Schnlitzer-Murphys, the eldest daughter, Gwendolyn, married a man whose father owns half of West Virginia.[42] She wrote home saying what a tough struggle she was carrying on on his salary as a bank clerk – and then she ended up by saying that "Thank God, I have four good maids anyhow, and that helps a little."'

'It's absurd,' commented Kismine. 'Think of the millions and millions of people in the world, laborers and all, who get along with only two maids.'

One afternoon late in August a chance remark of Kismine's changed the face of the entire situation, and threw John into a state of terror.

They were in their favorite grove, and between kisses John was indulging in some romantic forebodings which he fancied added poignancy to their relations.

'Sometimes I think we'll never marry,' he said sadly. 'You're too wealthy, too magnificent. No one as rich as you are can be like other girls. I should marry the daughter of some well-to-do wholesale hardware man from Omaha[43] or Sioux City,[44] and be content with her half-million.'

'I knew the daughter of a wholesale hardware man once,' remarked Kismine. 'I don't think you'd have been contented with her. She was a friend of my sister's. She visited here.'

'Oh, then you've had other guests?' exclaimed John in surprise.

Kismine seemed to regret her words.

‘Oh, yes,’ she said hurriedly, ‘we’ve had a few.’

‘But aren’t you – wasn’t your father afraid they’d talk outside?’

‘Oh, to some extent, to some extent,’ she answered. ‘Let’s talk about something pleasanter.’

But John’s curiosity was aroused.

‘Something pleasanter!’ he demanded. ‘What’s unpleasant about that? Weren’t they nice girls?’

To his great surprise Kismine began to weep.

‘Yes – th – that’s the – the whole t-trouble. I grew qu-quite attached to some of them. So did Jasmine, but she kept inv-viting them anyway. I couldn’t under*stand* it.’

A dark suspicion was born in John’s heart.

‘Do you mean that they *told*, and your father had them – removed?’

‘Worse than that,’ she muttered brokenly. ‘Father took no chances – and Jasmine kept writing them to come, and they had *such* a good time!’

She was overcome by a paroxysm of grief.

Stunned with the horror of this revelation, John sat there open-mouthed, feeling the nerves of his body twitter like so many sparrows perched upon his spinal column.

‘Now, I’ve told you, and I shouldn’t have,’ she said, calming suddenly and drying her dark blue eyes.

‘Do you mean to say that your father had them *murdered* before they left?’

She nodded.

‘In August usually – or early in September. It’s only natural for us to get all the pleasure out of them that we can first.’

‘How abominable! How – why, I must be going crazy! Did you really admit that – ’

‘I did,’ interrupted Kismine, shrugging her shoulders. ‘We can’t very well imprison them like those aviators, where they’d be a continual reproach to us every day. And it’s always been made easier for Jasmine and me because father had it done sooner than we expected. In that way we avoided any farewell scene – ’

‘So you murdered them! Uh!’ cried John.

‘It was done very nicely. They were drugged while they were asleep – and their families were always told that they died of scarlet fever in Butte.’

‘But – I fail to understand why you kept on inviting them!’

‘I didn’t,’ burst out Kismine. ‘I never invited one. Jasmine did. And they always had a very good time. She’d give them the nicest presents toward the last. I shall probably have visitors too – I’ll harden up to it. We can’t let such an inevitable thing as death stand in the

way of enjoying life while we have it. Think how lonesome it'd be out here if we never had *any* one. Why, father and mother have sacrificed some of their best friends just as we have.'

'And so,' cried John accusingly, 'and so you were letting me make love to you and pretending to return it, and talking about marriage, all the time knowing perfectly well that I'd never get out of here alive – '

'No,' she protested passionately. 'Not any more. I did at first. You were here. I couldn't help that, and I thought your last days might as well be pleasant for both of us. But then I fell in love with you, and – and I'm honestly sorry you're going to – going to be put away – though I'd rather you'd be put away than ever kiss another girl.'

'Oh, you would, would you?' cried John ferociously.

'Much rather. Besides, I've always heard that a girl can have more fun with a man whom she knows she can never marry. Oh, why did I tell you? I've probably spoiled your whole good time now, and we were really enjoying things when you didn't know it. I knew it would make things sort of depressing for you.'

'Oh, you did, did you?' John's voice trembled with anger. 'I've heard about enough of this. If you haven't any more pride and decency than to have an affair with a fellow that you know isn't much better than a corpse, I don't want to have any more to do with you!'

'You're not a corpse!' she protested in horror. 'You're not a corpse! I won't have you saying that I kissed a corpse!'

'I said nothing of the sort!'

'You did! You said I kissed a corpse!'

'I didn't!'

Their voices had risen, but upon a sudden interruption they both subsided into immediate silence. Footsteps were coming along the path in their direction, and a moment later the rose bushes were parted displaying Braddock Washington, whose intelligent eyes set in his good-looking vacuous face were peering in at them.

'Who kissed a corpse?' he demanded in obvious disapproval.

'Nobody,' answered Kismine quickly. 'We were just joking.'

'What are you two doing here, anyhow?' he demanded gruffly. 'Kismine, you ought to be – to be reading or playing golf with your sister. Go read! Go play golf! Don't let me find you here when I come back!'

Then he bowed at John and went up the path.

'See?' said Kismine crossly, when he was out of hearing. 'You've spoiled it all. We can never meet any more. He won't let me meet you. He'd have you poisoned if he thought we were in love.'

'We're not, any more!' cried John fiercely, 'So he can set his mind at rest upon that. Moreover, don't fool yourself that I'm going to stay

around here. Inside of six hours I'll be over those mountains, if I have to gnaw a passage through them, and on my way East.'

They had both got to their feet, and at this remark Kismine came close and put her arm through his.

'I'm going, too.'

'You must be crazy – '

'Of course I'm going,' she interrupted impatiently.

'You most certainly are not. You – '

'Very well,' she said quietly, 'we'll catch up with father now and talk it over with him.'

Defeated, John mustered a sickly smile.

'Very well, dearest,' he agreed, with pale and unconvincing affection, 'we'll go together.'

His love for her returned and settled placidly on his heart. She was his – she would go with him to share his dangers. He put his arms about her and kissed her fervently. After all she loved him; she had saved him, in fact.

Discussing the matter, they walked slowly back toward the château. They decided that since Braddock Washington had seen them together they had best depart the next night. Nevertheless, John's lips were unusually dry at dinner, and he nervously emptied a great spoonful of peacock soup into his left lung. He had to be carried into the turquoise and sable card-room and pounded on the back by one of the under-butlers, which Percy considered a great joke.

IX

Long after midnight John's body gave a nervous jerk, and he sat suddenly upright, staring into the veils of somnolence that draped the room. Through the squares of blue darkness that were his open windows, he had heard a faint far-away sound that died upon a bed of wind before identifying itself on his memory, clouded with uneasy dreams. But the sharp noise that had succeeded it was nearer, was just outside the room – the click of a turned knob, a footstep, a whisper, he could not tell; a hard lump gathered in the pit of his stomach, and his whole body ached in the moment that he strained agonizingly to hear. Then one of the veils seemed to dissolve, and he saw a vague figure standing by the door, a figure only faintly limned and blocked in upon the darkness, mingled so with the folds of the drapery as to seem distorted, like a reflection seen in a dirty pane of glass.

With a sudden movement of fright or resolution John pressed the button by his bedside, and the next moment he was sitting in the green sunken bath of the adjoining room, waked into alertness by the shock of the cold water which half filled it.

He sprang out, and, his wet pajamas scattering a heavy trickle of water behind him, ran for the aquamarine door which he knew led out onto the ivory landing of the second floor. The door opened noiselessly. A single crimson lamp burning in a great dome above lit the magnificent sweep of the carved stairways with a poignant beauty. For a moment John hesitated, appalled by the silent splendor massed about him, seeming to envelop in its gigantic folds and contours the solitary drenched little figure shivering upon the ivory landing. Then simultaneously two things happened. The door of his own sitting-room swung open, precipitating three naked negroes into the hall – and, as John swayed in wild terror toward the stairway, another door slid back in the wall on the other side of the corridor, and John saw Braddock Washington standing in the lighted lift, wearing a fur coat and a pair of riding boots which reached to his knees and displayed, above, the glow of his rose-colored pajamas.

On the instant the three negroes – John had never seen any of them before, and it flashed through his mind that they must be the professional executioners – paused in their movement toward John, and turned expectantly to the man in the lift, who burst out with an imperious command:

'Get in here! All three of you! Quick as hell!'

Then, within the instant, the three negroes darted into the cage, the oblong of light was blotted out as the lift door slid shut, and John was again alone in the hall. He slumped weakly down against an ivory

stair.

It was apparent that something portentous had occurred, something which, for the moment at least, had postponed his own petty disaster. What was it? Had the negroes risen in revolt? Had the aviators forced aside the iron bars of the grating? Or had the men of Fish stumbled blindly through the hills and gazed with bleak, joyless eyes upon the gaudy valley? John did not know. He heard a faint whir of air as the lift whizzed up again, and then, a moment later, as it descended. It was probable that Percy was hurrying to his father's assistance, and it occurred to John that this was his opportunity to join Kismine and plan an immediate escape. He waited until the lift had been silent for several minutes; shivering a little with the night cool that whipped in through his wet pajamas, he returned to his room and dressed himself quickly. Then he mounted a long flight of stairs and turned down the corridor carpeted with Russian sable which led to Kismine's suite.

The door of her sitting-room was open and the lamps were lighted. Kismine, in an angora kimono, stood near the window of the room in a listening attitude, and as John entered noiselessly she turned toward him.

'Oh, it's you!' she whispered, crossing the room to him. 'Did you hear them?'

'I heard your father's slaves in my – '

'No,' she interrupted excitedly. 'Aeroplanes!'

'Aeroplanes? Perhaps that was the sound that woke me.'

'There're at least a dozen. I saw one a few moments ago dead against the moon. The guard back by the cliff fired his rifle and that's what roused father. We're going to open on them right away.'

'Are they here on purpose?'

'Yes – it's that Italian who got away – '

Simultaneously with her last word, a succession of sharp cracks tumbled in through the open window. Kismine uttered a little cry, took a penny with fumbling fingers from a box on her dresser, and ran to one of the electric lights. In an instant the entire château was in darkness – she had blown out the fuse.

'Come on!' she cried to him. 'We'll go up to the roof garden, and watch it from there!'

Drawing a cape about her, she took his hand, and they found their way out the door. It was only a step to the tower lift, and as she pressed the button that shot them upward he put his arms around her in the darkness and kissed her mouth. Romance had come to John Unger at last. A minute later they had stepped out upon the star-white platform. Above, under the misty moon, sliding in and out of the patches of cloud that eddied below it, floated a dozen dark-winged

bodies in a constant circling course. From here and there in the valley flashes of fire leaped toward them, followed by sharp detonations. Kismine clapped her hands with pleasure, which, a moment later, turned to dismay as the aeroplanes at some prearranged signal, began to release their bombs and the whole of the valley became a panorama of deep reverberate sound and lurid light.

Before long the aim of the attackers became concentrated upon the points where the anti-aircraft guns were situated, and one of them was almost immediately reduced to a giant cinder to lie smouldering in a park of rose bushes.

'Kismine,' begged John, 'you'll be glad when I tell you that this attack came on the eve of my murder. If I hadn't heard that guard shoot off his gun back by the pass I should now be stone dead – '

'I can't hear you!' cried Kismine, intent on the scene before her. 'You'll have to talk louder!'

'I simply said,' shouted John, 'that we'd better get out before they begin to shell the château!'

Suddenly the whole portico[45] of the negro quarters cracked asunder, a geyser of flame shot up from under the colonnades, and great fragments of jagged marble were hurled as far as the borders of the lake.

'There go fifty thousand dollars' worth of slaves,' cried Kismine, 'at pre-war prices. So few Americans have any respect for property.'

John renewed his efforts to compel her to leave. The aim of the aeroplanes was becoming more precise minute by minute, and only two of the antiaircraft guns were still retaliating. It was obvious that the garrison, encircled with fire, could not hold out much longer.

'Come on!' cried John, pulling Kismine's arm, 'we've got to go. Do you realize that those aviators will kill you without question if they find you?'

She consented reluctantly.

'We'll have to wake Jasmine!' she said, as they hurried toward the lift. Then she added in a sort of childish delight: 'We'll be poor, won't we? Like people in books. And I'll be an orphan and utterly free. Free and poor! What fun!' She stopped and raised her lips to him in a delighted kiss.

'It's impossible to be both together,' said John grimly. 'People have found that out. And I should choose to be free as preferable of the two. As an extra caution you'd better dump the contents of your jewel box into your pockets.'

Ten minutes later the two girls met John in the dark corridor and they descended to the main floor of the château. Passing for the last time through the magnificence of the splendid halls, they stood for a moment out on the terrace, watching the burning negro quarters and

the flaming embers of two planes which had fallen on the other side of the lake. A solitary gun was still keeping up a sturdy popping, and the attackers seemed timorous about descending lower, but sent their thunderous fireworks in a circle around it, until any chance shot might annihilate its Ethiopian crew.

John and the two sisters passed down the marble steps, turned sharply to the left, and began to ascend a narrow path that wound like a garter about the diamond mountain. Kismine knew a heavily wooded spot half-way up where they could lie concealed and yet be able to observe the wild night in the valley – finally to make an escape, when it should be necessary, along a secret path laid in a rocky gully.

X

It was three o'clock when they attained their destination. The obliging and phlegmatic Jasmine fell off to sleep immediately, leaning against the trunk of a large tree, while John and Kismine sat, his arm around her, and watched the desperate ebb and flow of the dying battle among the ruins of a vista that had been a garden spot that morning. Shortly after four o'clock the last remaining gun gave out a clanging sound and went out of action in a swift tongue of red smoke. Though the moon was down, they saw that the flying bodies were circling closer to the earth. When the planes had made certain that the beleaguered possessed no further resources, they would land and the dark and glittering reign of the Washingtons would be over.

With the cessation of the firing the valley grew quiet. The embers of the two aeroplanes glowed like the eyes of some monster crouching in the grass. The château stood dark and silent, beautiful without light as it had been beautiful in the sun, while the woody rattles of Nemesis[46] filled the air above with a growing and receding complaint. Then John perceived that Kismine, like her sister, had fallen sound asleep.

It was long after four when he became aware of footsteps along the path they had lately followed, and he waited in breathless silence until the persons to whom they belonged had passed the vantage-point he occupied. There was a faint stir in the air now that was not of human origin, and the dew was cold; he knew that the dawn would break soon. John waited until the steps had gone a safe distance up the mountain and were inaudible. Then he followed. About half-way to the steep summit the trees fell away and a hard saddle of rock spread itself over the diamond beneath. Just before he reached this point he slowed down his pace, warned by an animal sense that there was life just ahead of him. Coming to a high boulder, he lifted his head gradually above its edge. His curiosity was rewarded; this is what he saw:

Braddock Washington was standing there motionless, silhouetted against the gray sky without sound or sign of life. As the dawn came up out of the east, lending a cold green color to the earth, it brought the solitary figure into insignificant contrast with the new day.

While John watched, his host remained for a few moments absorbed in some inscrutable contemplation; then he signalled to the two negroes who crouched at his feet to lift the burden which lay between them. As they struggled upright, the first yellow beam of the sun struck through the innumerable prisms of an immense and exquisitely chiselled diamond – and a white radiance was kindled that

glowed upon the air like a fragment of the morning star. The bearers staggered beneath its weight for a moment – then their rippling muscles caught and hardened under the wet shine of the skins and the three figures were again motionless in their defiant impotency before the heavens.

After a while the white man lifted his head and slowly raised his arms in a gesture of attention, as one who would call a great crowd to hear – but there was no crowd, only the vast silence of the mountain and the sky, broken by faint bird voices down among the trees. The figure on the saddle of rock began to speak ponderously and with an inextinguishable pride.

'You out there – ' he cried in a trembling voice. 'You – there —!' He paused, his arms still uplifted, his head held attentively as though he were expecting an answer. John strained his eyes to see whether there might be men coming down the mountain, but the mountain was bare of human life. There was only sky and a mocking flute of wind along the tree-tops. Could Washington be praying? For a moment John wondered. Then the illusion passed – there was something in the man's whole attitude antithetical to prayer.

'Oh, you above there!'

The voice was become strong and confident. This was no forlorn supplication. If anything, there was in it a quality of monstrous condescension.

'You there – '

Words, too quickly uttered to be understood, flowing one into the other… John listened breathlessly, catching a phrase here and there, while the voice broke off, resumed, broke off again – now strong and argumentative, now colored with a slow, puzzled impatience. Then a conviction commenced to dawn on the single listener, and as realization crept over him a spray of quick blood rushed through his arteries. Braddock Washington was offering a bribe to God!

That was it – there was no doubt. The diamond in the arms of his slaves was some advance sample, a promise of more to follow.

That, John perceived after a time, was the thread running through his sentences. Prometheus Enriched was calling to witness forgotten sacrifices, forgotten rituals, prayers obsolete before the birth of Christ. For a while his discourse took the form of reminding God of this gift or that which Divinity[47] had deigned to accept from men – great churches if he would rescue cities from the plague, gifts of myrrh and gold, of human lives and beautiful women and captive armies, of children and queens, of beasts of the forest and field, sheep and goats, harvests and cities, whole conquered lands that had been offered up in lust or blood for His appeasal, buying a meed's worth of alleviation from the Divine wrath – and now he, Braddock

Washington, Emperor of Diamonds, king and priest of the age of gold, arbiter of splendor and luxury, would offer up a treasure such as princes before him had never dreamed of, offer it up not in suppliance, but in pride.

He would give to God, he continued, getting down to specifications, the greatest diamond in the world. This diamond would be cut with many more thousand facets than there were leaves on a tree, and yet the whole diamond would be shaped with the perfection of a stone no bigger than a fly. Many men would work upon it for many years. It would be set in a great dome of beaten gold, wonderfully carved and equipped with gates of opal and crusted sapphire. In the middle would be hollowed out a chapel presided over by an altar of iridescent, decomposing, ever-changing radium which would burn out the eyes of any worshipper who lifted up his head from prayer – and on this altar there would be slain for the amusement of the Divine Benefactor any victim He should choose, even though it should be the greatest and most powerful man alive.

In return he asked only a simple thing, a thing that for God would be absurdly easy – only that matters should be as they were yesterday at this hour and that they should so remain. So very simple! Let but the heavens open, swallowing these men and their aeroplanes – and then close again. Let him have his slaves once more, restored to life and well.

There was no one else with whom he had ever needed to treat or bargain.

He doubted only whether he had made his bribe big enough. God had His price, of course. God was made in man's image, so it had been said: He must have His price. And the price would be rare – no cathedral whose building consumed many years, no pyramid constructed by ten thousand workmen, would be like this cathedral, this pyramid.

He paused here. That was his proposition. Everything would be up to specifications and there was nothing vulgar in his assertion that it would be cheap at the price. He implied that Providence could take it or leave it.

As he approached the end his sentences became broken, became short and uncertain, and his body seemed tense, seemed strained to catch the slightest pressure or whisper of life in the spaces around him. His hair had turned gradually white as he talked, and now he lifted his head high to the heavens like a prophet of old – magnificently mad.

Then, as John stared in giddy fascination, it seemed to him that a curious phenomenon took place somewhere around him. It was as though the sky had darkened for an instant, as though there had been

a sudden murmur in a gust of wind, a sound of far-away trumpets, a sighing like the rustle of a great silken robe – for a time the whole of nature round about partook of this darkness; the birds' song ceased; the trees were still, and far over the mountain there was a mutter of dull, menacing thunder.

That was all. The wind died along the tall grasses of the valley. The dawn and the day resumed their place in a time, and the risen sun sent hot waves of yellow mist that made its path bright before it. The leaves laughed in the sun, and their laughter shook the trees until each bough was like a girl's school in fairyland. God had refused to accept the bribe.

For another moment John watched the triumph of the day. Then, turning he saw a flutter of brown down by the lake, then another flutter, then another, like the dance of golden angels alighting from the clouds. The aeroplanes had come to earth.

John slid off the boulder and ran down the side of the mountain to the clump of trees, where the two girls were awake and waiting for him. Kismine sprang to her feet, the jewels in her pockets jingling, a question on her parted lips, but instinct told John that there was no time for words. They must get off the mountain without losing a moment. He seized a hand of each and in silence they threaded the tree-trunks, washed with light now and with the rising mist. Behind them from the valley came no sound at all, except the complaint of the peacocks far away and the pleasant undertone of morning.

When they had gone about half a mile, they avoided the park land and entered a narrow path that led over the next rise of ground. At the highest point of this they paused and turned around. Their eyes rested upon the mountainside they had just left – oppressed by some dark sense of tragic impendency.

Clear against the sky a broken, white-haired man was slowly descending the steep slope, followed by two gigantic and emotionless negroes, who carried a burden between them which still flashed and glittered in the sun. Half-way down two other figures joined them – John could see that they were Mrs. Washington and her son, upon whose arm she leaned. The aviators had clambered from their machines to the sweeping lawn in front of the château, and with rifles in hand were starting up the diamond mountain in skirmishing formation.

But the little group of five which had formed farther up and was engrossing all the watchers' attention had stopped upon a ledge of rock. The negroes stooped and pulled up what appeared to be a trap-door in the side of the mountain. Into this they all disappeared, the white-haired man first, then his wife and son, finally the two negroes, the glittering tips of whose jeweled head-dresses caught the sun for a

moment before the trap-door descended and engulfed them all.

Kismine clutched John's arm.

'Oh,' she cried wildly, 'where are they going? What are they going to do?'

'It must be some underground way of escape.'

A little scream from the two girls interrupted his sentence.

'Don't you see?' sobbed Kismine hysterically. 'The mountain is wired!'

Even as she spoke John put up his hands to shield his sight. Before their eyes the whole surface of the mountain had changed suddenly to a dazzling burning yellow, which showed up through the jacket of turf as light shows through a human hand. For a moment the intolerable glow continued, and then like an extinguished filament it disappeared, revealing a black waste from which blue smoke arose slowly, carrying off with it what remained of vegetation and of human flesh. Of the aviators there was left neither blood, nor bone – they were consumed as completely as the five souls who had gone inside.

Simultaneously, and with an immense concussion, the château literally threw itself into the air, bursting into flaming fragments as it rose, and then tumbling back upon itself in a smoking pile that lay projecting half into the water of the lake. There was no fire – what smoke there was drifted off mingling with the sunshine, and for a few minutes longer a powdery dust of marble drifted from the great featureless pile that had once been the house of jewels. There was no more sound and the three people were alone in the valley.

XI

At sunset John and his two companions reached the high cliff which had marked the boundaries of the Washingtons' dominion, and looking back found the valley tranquil and lovely in the dusk. They sat down to finish the food which Jasmine had brought with her in a basket.

'There!' she said, as she spread the table-cloth and put the sandwiches in a neat pile upon it. 'Don't they look tempting? I always think that food tastes better outdoors.'

'With that remark,' remarked Kismine, 'Jasmine enters the middle class.'

'Now,' said John eagerly, 'turn out your pocket and let's see what jewels you brought along. If you made a good selection we three ought to live comfortably all the rest of our lives.'

Obediently Kismine put her hand in her pocket and tossed two handfuls of glittering stones before him.

'Not so bad,' cried John, enthusiastically. 'They aren't very big, but – Hello!' His expression changed as he held one of them up to the declining sun. 'Why, these aren't diamonds! There's something the matter!'

'By golly!'[48] exclaimed Kismine, with a startled look. 'What an idiot I am!'

'Why, these are rhinestones![49]' cried John.

'I know.' She broke into a laugh. 'I opened the wrong drawer. They belonged on the dress of a girl who visited Jasmine. I got her to give them to me in exchange for diamonds. I'd never seen anything but precious stones before.'

'And this is what you brought?'

'I'm afraid so.' She fingered the brilliants wistfully. 'I think I like these better. I'm a little tired of diamonds.'

'Very well,' said John gloomily. 'We'll have to live in Hades. And you will grow old telling incredulous women that you got the wrong drawer. Unfortunately your father's bank-books were consumed with him.'

'Well, what's the matter with Hades?'

'If I come home with a wife at my age my father is just as liable as not to cut me off with a hot coal,[50] as they say down there.'

Jasmine spoke up.

'I love washing,' she said quietly. 'I have always washed my own handkerchiefs. I'll take in laundry and support you both.'

'Do they have washwomen in Hades?' asked Kismine innocently.

'Of course,' answered John. 'It's just like anywhere else.'

‘I thought – perhaps it was too hot to wear any clothes.’

John laughed.

‘Just try it!’ he suggested. ‘They’ll run you out before you’re half started.’

‘Will father be there?’ she asked.

John turned to her in astonishment.

‘Your father is dead,’ he replied somberly. ‘Why should he go to Hades? You have it confused with another place that was abolished long ago.’

After supper they folded up the table-cloth and spread their blankets for the night.

‘What a dream it was,’ Kismine sighed, gazing up at the stars. ‘How strange it seems to be here with one dress and a penniless fiancé!

‘Under the stars,’ she repeated. ‘I never noticed the stars before. I always thought of them as great big diamonds that belonged to some one. Now they frighten me. They make me feel that it was all a dream, all my youth.’

‘It *was* a dream,’ said John quietly. ‘Everybody’s youth is a dream, a form of chemical madness.’

‘How pleasant then to be insane!’

‘So I’m told,’ said John gloomily. ‘I don’t know any longer. At any rate, let us love for a while, for a year or so, you and me. That’s a form of divine drunkenness that we can all try. There are only diamonds in the whole world, diamonds and perhaps the shabby gift of disillusion. Well, I have that last and I will make the usual nothing of it.’ He shivered. ‘Turn up your coat collar, little girl, the night’s full of chill and you’ll get pneumonia. His was a great sin who first invented consciousness. Let us lose it for a few hours.’

So wrapping himself in his blanket he fell off to sleep.

John Galsworthy
Indian Summer of a Forsyte

And Summer's lease hath all too short a date.

Shakespeare

I

In the last day of May in the early ’nineties, about six o’clock of the evening, old Jolyon Forsyte sat under the oak tree below the terrace of his house at Robin Hill. He was waiting for the midges to bite him, before abandoning the glory of the afternoon. His thin brown hand, where blue veins stood out, held the end of a cigar in its tapering, long – nailed fingers – a pointed polished nail had survived with him from those earlier Victorian days when to touch nothing, even with the tips of the fingers, had been so distinguished. His domed forehead, great white moustache, lean cheeks, and long lean jaw were covered from the westering sunshine by an old brown Panama hat. His legs were crossed; in all his attitude was serenity and a kind of elegance, as of an old man who every morning put eau de Cologne upon his silk handkerchief. At his feet lay a woolly brown-and-white dog trying to be a Pomeranian[51] – the dog Balthasar between whom and old Jolyon primal aversion had changed into attachment with the years. Close to his chair was a swing, and on the swing was seated one of Holly’s dolls – called ‘Duffer Alice’ – with her body fallen over her legs and her doleful nose buried in a black petticoat. She was never out of disgrace, so it did not matter to her how she sat. Below the oak tree the lawn dipped down a bank, stretched to the fernery, and, beyond that refinement, became fields, dropping to the pond, the coppice, and the prospect – ‘Fine, remarkable’ – at which Swithin Forsyte, from under this very tree, had stared five years ago when he drove down with Irene to look at the house. Old Jolyon had heard of his brother’s exploit – that drive which had become quite celebrated on Forsyte “Change.” Swithin! And the fellow had gone and died, last November, at the age of only seventy-nine, renewing the doubt whether Forsytes could live for ever, which had first arisen when Aunt Ann passed away. Died! and left only Jolyon and James, Roger and Nicholas and Timothy, Julia, Hester, Susan! And old Jolyon thought: ‘Eighty-five! I don’t feel it – except when I get that pain.’

His memory went searching. He had not felt his age since he had bought his nephew Soames’ ill-starred house and settled into it here at Robin Hill over three years ago. It was as if he had been getting younger every spring, living in the country with his son and his grandchildren – June, and the little ones of the second marriage, Jolly and Holly; living down here out of the racket of London and the cackle of Forsyte “Change,” free of his boards, in a delicious atmosphere of no work and all play, with plenty of occupation in the perfecting and mellowing of the house and its twenty acres, and in

ministering to the whims of Holly and Jolly. All the knots and crankiness, which had gathered in his heart during that long and tragic business of June, Soames, Irene his wife, and poor young Bosinney, had been smoothed out. Even June had thrown off her melancholy at last – witness this travel in Spain she was taking now with her father and her stepmother. Curiously perfect peace was left by their departure; blissful, yet blank, because his son was not there. Jo was never anything but a comfort and a pleasure to him nowadays – an amiable chap; but women, somehow – even the best – got a little on one's nerves, unless of course one admired them.

Far-off a cuckoo called; a wood-pigeon was cooing from the first elm-tree in the field, and how the daisies and buttercups had sprung up after the last mowing! The wind had got into the sou'-west, too – a delicious air, sappy! He pushed his hat back and let the sun fall on his chin and cheek. Somehow, to-day, he wanted company – wanted a pretty face to look at. People treated the old as if they wanted nothing. And with the un-Forsytean philosophy which ever intruded on his soul, he thought: 'One's never had enough. With a foot in the grave one'll want something, I shouldn't be surprised!' Down here – away from the exigencies of affairs – his grandchildren, and the flowers, trees, birds of his little domain, to say nothing of sun and moon and stars above them, said, 'Open, sesame,' to him day and night. And sesame had opened – how much, perhaps, he did not know. He had always been responsive to what they had begun to call 'Nature,' genuinely, almost religiously responsive, though he had never lost his habit of calling a sunset a sunset and a view a view, however deeply they might move him. But nowadays Nature actually made him ache, he appreciated it so. Every one of these calm, bright, lengthening days, with Holly's hand in his, and the dog Balthasar in front looking studiously for what he never found, he would stroll, watching the roses open, fruit budding on the walls, sunlight brightening the oak leaves and saplings in the coppice, watching the water-lily leaves unfold and glisten, and the silvery young corn of the one wheat field; listening to the starlings and skylarks, and the Alderney cows[52] chewing the cud, flicking slow their tufted tails; and every one of these fine days he ached a little from sheer love of it all, feeling perhaps, deep down, that he had not very much longer to enjoy it. The thought that some day – perhaps not ten years hence, perhaps not five – all this world would be taken away from him, before he had exhausted his powers of loving it, seemed to him in the nature of an injustice brooding over his horizon. If anything came after this life, it wouldn't be what he wanted; not Robin Hill, and flowers and birds and pretty faces – too few, even now, of those about him! With the years his dislike of humbug had increased; the

orthodoxy he had worn in the 'sixties, as he had worn side-whiskers out of sheer exuberance, had long dropped off, leaving him reverent before three things alone – beauty, upright conduct, and the sense of property; and the greatest of these now was beauty. He had always had wide interests, and, indeed could still read The Times, but he was liable at any moment to put it down if he heard a blackbird sing. Upright conduct, property – somehow, they were tiring; the blackbirds and the sunsets never tired him, only gave him an uneasy feeling that he could not get enough of them. Staring into the stilly radiance of the early evening and at the little gold and white flowers on the lawn, a thought came to him: This weather was like the music of 'Orfeo,'[53] which he had recently heard at Covent Garden.[54] A beautiful opera, not like Meyerbeer,[55] nor even quite Mozart, but, in its way, perhaps even more lovely; something classical and of the Golden Age[56] about it, chaste and mellow, and the Ravogli[57] 'almost worthy of the old days' – highest praise he could bestow. The yearning of Orpheus[58] for the beauty he was losing, for his love going down to Hades, as in life love and beauty did go – the yearning which sang and throbbed through the golden music, stirred also in the lingering beauty of the world that evening. And with the tip of his cork-soled, elastic-sided boot he involuntarily stirred the ribs of the dog Balthasar, causing the animal to wake and attack his fleas; for though he was supposed to have none, nothing could persuade him of the fact. When he had finished he rubbed the place he had been scratching against his master's calf, and settled down again with his chin over the instep of the disturbing boot. And into old Jolyon's mind came a sudden recollection – a face he had seen at that opera three weeks ago – Irene, the wife of his precious nephew Soames, that man of property! Though he had not met her since the day of the 'At Home' in his old house at Stanhope Gate, which celebrated his granddaughter June's ill-starred engagement to young Bosinney, he had remembered her at once, for he had always admired her – a very pretty creature. After the death of young Bosinney, whose mistress she had so reprehensibly become, he had heard that she had left Soames at once. Goodness only knew what she had been doing since. That sight of her face – a side view – in the row in front, had been literally the only reminder these three years that she was still alive. No one ever spoke of her. And yet Jo had told him something once – something which had upset him completely. The boy had got it from George Forsyte, he believed, who had seen Bosinney in the fog the day he was run over – something which explained the young fellow's distress – an act of Soames towards his wife – a shocking act. Jo had seen her, too, that afternoon, after the news was out, seen her for a moment, and his description had always lingered in old Jolyon's mind – 'wild and lost' he had

called her. And next day June had gone there – bottled up her feelings and gone there, and the maid had cried and told her how her mistress had slipped out in the night and vanished. A tragic business altogether! One thing was certain – Soames had never been able to lay hands on her again. And he was living at Brighton,[59] and journeying up and down – a fitting fate, the man of property! For when he once took a dislike to anyone – as he had to his nephew – old Jolyon never got over it. He remembered still the sense of relief with which he had heard the news of Irene's disappearance. It had been shocking to think of her a prisoner in that house to which she must have wandered back, when Jo saw her, wandered back for a moment – like a wounded animal to its hole after seeing that news, 'Tragic death of an Architect,' in the street. Her face had struck him very much the other night – more beautiful than he had remembered, but like a mask, with something going on beneath it. A young woman still – twenty – eight perhaps. Ah, well! Very likely she had another lover by now. But at this subversive thought – for married women should never love: once, even, had been too much – his instep rose, and with it the dog Balthasar's head. The sagacious animal stood up and looked into old Jolyon's face. 'Walk?' he seemed to say; and old Jolyon answered: 'Come on, old chap!'

Slowly, as was their wont, they crossed among the constellations of buttercups and daisies, and entered the fernery. This feature, where very little grew as yet, had been judiciously dropped below the level of the lawn so that it might come up again on the level of the other lawn and give the impression of irregularity, so important in horticulture. Its rocks and earth were beloved of the dog Balthasar, who sometimes found a mole there. Old Jolyon made a point of passing through it because, though it was not beautiful, he intended that it should be, some day, and he would think: 'I must get Varr to come down and look at it; he's better than Beech.' For plants, like houses and human complaints, required the best expert consideration. It was inhabited by snails, and if accompanied by his grandchildren, he would point to one and tell them the story of the little boy who said: 'Have plummers got leggers, Mother?' 'No, sonny.' 'Then darned if I haven't been and swallowed a snileybob.' And when they skipped and clutched his hand, thinking of the snileybob going down the little boy's 'red lane,' his eyes would twinkle. Emerging from the fernery, he opened the wicket gate, which just there led into the first field, a large and park – like area, out of which, within brick walls, the vegetable garden had been carved. Old Jolyon avoided this, which did not suit his mood, and made down the hill towards the pond. Balthasar, who knew a water-rat or two, gambolled in front, at the gait which marks an oldish dog who takes the same walk every day. Arrived at the edge,

old Jolyon stood, noting another water-lily opened since yesterday; he would show it to Holly to-morrow, when 'his little sweet' had got over the upset which had followed on her eating a tomato at lunch – her little arrangements were very delicate. Now that Jolly had gone to school – his first term – Holly was with him nearly all day long, and he missed her badly. He felt that pain too, which often bothered him now, a little dragging at his left side. He looked back up the hill. Really, poor young Bosinney had made an uncommonly good job of the house; he would have done very well for himself if he had lived! And where was he now? Perhaps, still haunting this, the site of his last work, of his tragic love affair. Or was Philip Bosinney's spirit diffused in the general? Who could say? That dog was getting his legs muddy! And he moved towards the coppice. There had been the most delightful lot of bluebells, and he knew where some still lingered like little patches of sky fallen in between the trees, away out of the sun. He passed the cow-houses and the hen-houses there installed, and pursued a path into the thick of the saplings, making for one of the bluebell plots. Balthasar, preceding him once more, uttered a low growl. Old Jolyon stirred him with his foot, but the dog remained motionless, just where there was no room to pass, and the hair rose slowly along the centre of his woolly back. Whether from the growl and the look of the dog's slivered hair, or from the sensation which a man feels in a wood, old Jolyon also felt something move along his spine. And then the path turned, and there was an old mossy log, and on it a woman sitting. Her face was turned away, and he had just time to think: 'She's trespassing – I must have a board put up!' before she turned. Powers above! The face he had seen at the opera – the very woman he had just been thinking of! In that confused moment he saw things blurred, as if a spirit – queer effect – the slant of sunlight perhaps on her violet-grey frock! And then she rose and stood smiling, her head a little to one side. Old Jolyon thought: 'How pretty she is!' She did not speak, neither did he; and he realized why with a certain admiration. She was here no doubt because of some memory, and did not mean to try and get out of it by vulgar explanation.

'Don't let that dog touch your frock,' he said; 'he's got wet feet. Come here, you!'

But the dog Balthasar went on towards the visitor, who put her hand down and stroked his head. Old Jolyon said quickly:

'I saw you at the opera the other night; you didn't notice me.'

'Oh, yes! I did.'

He felt a subtle flattery in that, as though she had added: 'Do you think one could miss seeing you?'

'They're all in Spain,' he remarked abruptly. 'I'm alone; I drove up for the opera. The Ravogli's good. Have you seen the cow-houses?'

In a situation so charged with mystery and something very like emotion he moved instinctively towards that bit of property, and she moved beside him. Her figure swayed faintly, like the best kind of French figures; her dress, too, was a sort of French grey. He noticed two or three silver threads in her amber-coloured hair, strange hair with those dark eyes of hers, and that creamy-pale face. A sudden sidelong look from the velvety brown eyes disturbed him. It seemed to come from deep and far, from another world almost, or at all events from some one not living very much in this. And he said mechanically:

'Where are you living now?'

'I have a little flat in Chelsea.[60]'

He did not want to hear what she was doing, did not want to hear anything; but the perverse word came out:

'Alone?'

She nodded. It was a relief to know that. And it came into his mind that, but for a twist of fate, she would have been mistress of this coppice, showing these cow-houses to him, a visitor.

'All Alderneys,' he muttered; 'they give the best milk. This one's a pretty creature. Woa, Myrtle!'

The fawn-coloured cow, with eyes as soft and brown as Irene's own, was standing absolutely still, not having long been milked. She looked round at them out of the corner of those lustrous, mild, cynical eyes, and from her grey lips a little dribble of saliva threaded its way towards the straw. The scent of hay and vanilla and ammonia rose in the dim light of the cool cow-house; and old Jolyon said:

'You must come up and have some dinner with me. I'll send you home in the carriage.'

He perceived a struggle going on within her; natural, no doubt, with her memories. But he wanted her company; a pretty face, a charming figure, beauty! He had been alone all the afternoon. Perhaps his eyes were wistful, for she answered: 'Thank you, Uncle Jolyon. I should like to.'

He rubbed his hands, and said:

'Capital! Let's go up, then!' And, preceded by the dog Balthasar, they ascended through the field. The sun was almost level in their faces now, and he could see, not only those silver threads, but little lines, just deep enough to stamp her beauty with a coin-like fineness – the special look of life unshared with others. 'I'll take her in by the terrace,' he thought: 'I won't make a common visitor of her.'

'What do you do all day?' he said.

'Teach music; I have another interest, too.'

'Work!' said old Jolyon, picking up the doll from off the swing, and smoothing its black petticoat. 'Nothing like it, is there? I don't do any now. I'm getting on. What interest is that?'

‘Trying to help women who’ve come to grief.’ Old Jolyon did not quite understand. ‘To grief?’ he repeated; then realised with a shock that she meant exactly what he would have meant himself if he had used that expression. Assisting the Magdalenes[61] of London! What a weird and terrifying interest! And, curiosity overcoming his natural shrinking, he asked:

‘Why? What do you do for them?’

‘Not much. I’ve no money to spare. I can only give sympathy and food sometimes.’

Involuntarily old Jolyon’s hand sought his purse. He said hastily: ‘How d’you get hold of them?’

‘I go to a hospital.’

‘A hospital! Phew!’

‘What hurts me most is that once they nearly all had some sort of beauty.’

Old Jolyon straightened the doll. ‘Beauty!’ he ejaculated: ‘Ha! Yes! A sad business!’ and he moved towards the house. Through a French window,[62] under sun-blinds not yet drawn up, he preceded her into the room where he was wont to study The Times and the sheets of an agricultural magazine, with huge illustrations of mangold wurzels, and the like, which provided Holly with material for her paint brush.

‘Dinner’s in half an hour. You’d like to wash your hands! I’ll take you to June’s room.’

He saw her looking round eagerly; what changes since she had last visited this house with her husband, or her lover, or both perhaps – he did not know, could not say! All that was dark, and he wished to leave it so. But what changes! And in the hall he said:

‘My boy Jo’s a painter, you know. He’s got a lot of taste. It isn’t mine, of course, but I’ve let him have his way.’

She was standing very still, her eyes roaming through the hall and music room, as it now was – all thrown into one, under the great skylight. Old Jolyon had an odd impression of her. Was she trying to conjure somebody from the shades of that space where the colouring was all pearl-grey and silver? He would have had gold himself; more lively and solid. But Jo had French tastes, and it had come out shadowy like that, with an effect as of the fume of cigarettes the chap was always smoking, broken here and there by a little blaze of blue or crimson colour. It was not his dream! Mentally he had hung this space with those gold-framed masterpieces of still and stiller life which he had bought in days when quantity was precious. And now where were they? Sold for a song! That something which made him, alone among Forsytes, move with the times had warned him against the struggle to retain them. But in his study he still had ‘Dutch Fishing Boats at

Sunset.'

He began to mount the stairs with her, slowly, for he felt his side.

'These are the bathrooms,' he said, 'and other arrangements. I've had them tiled. The nurseries are along there. And this is Jo's and his wife's. They all communicate. But you remember, I expect.'

Irene nodded. They passed on, up the gallery and entered a large room with a small bed, and several windows.

'This is mine,' he said. The walls were covered with the photographs of children and watercolour sketches, and he added doubtfully:

'These are Jo's. The view's first-rate. You can see the Grand Stand at Epsom[63] in clear weather.'

The sun was down now, behind the house, and over the 'prospect' a luminous haze had settled, emanation of the long and prosperous day. Few houses showed, but fields and trees faintly glistened, away to a loom of downs.

'The country's changing,' he said abruptly, 'but there it'll be when we're all gone. Look at those thrushes – the birds are sweet here in the mornings. I'm glad to have washed my hands of London.'

Her face was close to the window pane, and he was struck by its mournful look. 'Wish I could make her look happy!' he thought. 'A pretty face, but sad!' And taking up his can of hot water he went out into the gallery.

'This is June's room,' he said, opening the next door and putting the can down; 'I think you'll find everything.' And closing the door behind her he went back to his own room. Brushing his hair with his great ebony brushes, and dabbing his forehead with eau de Cologne, he mused. She had come so strangely – a sort of visitation; mysterious, even romantic, as if his desire for company, for beauty, had been fulfilled by whatever it was which fulfilled that sort of thing. And before the mirror he straightened his still upright figure, passed the brushes over his great white moustache, touched up his eyebrows with eau de Cologne, and rang the bell.

'I forgot to let them know that I have a lady to dinner with me. Let cook do something extra, and tell Beacon to have the landau[64] and pair at half-past ten to drive her back to Town to-night. Is Miss Holly asleep?'

The maid thought not. And old Jolyon, passing down the gallery, stole on tiptoe towards the nursery, and opened the door whose hinges he kept specially oiled that he might slip in and out in the evenings without being heard.

But Holly was asleep, and lay like a miniature Madonna, of that type which the old painters could not tell from Venus,[65] when they had completed her. Her long dark lashes clung to her cheeks; on her

face was perfect peace – her little arrangements were evidently all right again. And old Jolyon, in the twilight of the room, stood adoring her! It was so charming, solemn, and loving – that little face. He had more than his share of the blessed capacity of living again in the young. They were to him his future life – all of a future life that his fundamental pagan sanity perhaps admitted. There she was with everything before her, and his blood – some of it – in her tiny veins. There she was, his little companion, to be made as happy as ever he could make her, so that she knew nothing but love. His heart swelled, and he went out, stilling the sound of his patent-leather boots. In the corridor an eccentric notion attacked him: To think that children should come to that which Irene had told him she was helping! Women who were all, once, little things like this one sleeping there! 'I must give her a cheque!' he mused; 'Can't bear to think of them!' They had never borne reflecting on, those poor outcasts; wounding too deeply the core of true refinement hidden under layers of conformity to the sense of property – wounding too grievously the deepest thing in him – a love of beauty which could give him, even now, a flutter of the heart, thinking of his evening in the society of a pretty woman. And he went downstairs, through the swinging doors, to the back regions. There, in the wine-cellar, was a hock worth at least two pounds a bottle, a Steinberg Cabinet, better than any Johannisberg[66] that ever went down throat; a wine of perfect bouquet, sweet as a nectarine – nectar indeed! He got a bottle out, handling it like a baby, and holding it level to the light, to look. Enshrined in its coat of dust, that mellow coloured, slender-necked bottle gave him deep pleasure. Three years to settle down again since the move from Town – ought to be in prime condition! Thirty-five years ago he had bought it – thank God he had kept his palate, and earned the right to drink it. She would appreciate this; not a spice of acidity in a dozen. He wiped the bottle, drew the cork with his own hands, put his nose down, inhaled its perfume, and went back to the music room.

Irene was standing by the piano; she had taken off her hat and a lace scarf she had been wearing, so that her gold-coloured hair was visible, and the pallor of her neck. In her grey frock she made a pretty picture for old Jolyon, against the rosewood of the piano.

He gave her his arm, and solemnly they went. The room, which had been designed to enable twenty-four people to dine in comfort, held now but a little round table. In his present solitude the big dining-table oppressed old Jolyon; he had caused it to be removed till his son came back. Here in the company of two really good copies of Raphael[67] Madonnas he was wont to dine alone. It was the only disconsolate hour of his day, this summer weather. He had never been a large eater, like that great chap Swithin, or Sylvanus Heythorp, or

Anthony Thornworthy, those cronies of past times; and to dine alone, overlooked by the Madonnas, was to him but a sorrowful occupation, which he got through quickly, that he might come to the more spiritual enjoyment of his coffee and cigar. But this evening was a different matter! His eyes twinkled at her across the little table and he spoke of Italy and Switzerland, telling her stories of his travels there, and other experiences which he could no longer recount to his son and grand – daughter because they knew them. This fresh audience was precious to him; he had never become one of those old men who ramble round and round the fields of reminiscence. Himself quickly fatigued by the insensitive, he instinctively avoided fatiguing others, and his natural flirtatiousness towards beauty guarded him specially in his relations with a woman. He would have liked to draw her out, but though she murmured and smiled and seemed to be enjoying what he told her, he remained conscious of that mysterious remoteness which constituted half her fascination. He could not bear women who threw their shoulders and eyes at you, and chattered away; or hard-mouthed women who laid down the law and knew more than you did. There was only one quality in a woman that appealed to him – charm; and the quieter it was, the more he liked it. And this one had charm, shadowy as afternoon sunlight on those Italian hills and valleys he had loved. The feeling, too, that she was, as it were, apart, cloistered, made her seem nearer to himself, a strangely desirable companion. When a man is very old and quite out of the running, he loves to feel secure from the rivalries of youth, for he would still be first in the heart of beauty. And he drank his hock, and watched her lips, and felt nearly young. But the dog Balthasar lay watching her lips too, and despising in his heart the interruptions of their talk, and the tilting of those greenish glasses full of a golden fluid which was distasteful to him.

The light was just failing when they went back into the music – room. And, cigar in mouth, old Jolyon said:

'Play me some Chopin.'

By the cigars they smoke, and the composers they love, ye shall know the texture of men's souls. Old Jolyon could not bear a strong cigar or Wagner's[68] music. He loved Beethoven[69] and Mozart,[70] Handel[71] and Gluck,[72] and Schumann,[73] and, for some occult reason, the operas of Meyerbeer; but of late years he had been seduced by Chopin, just as in painting he had succumbed to Botticelli.[74] In yielding to these tastes he had been conscious of divergence from the standard of the Golden Age. Their poetry was not that of Milton[75] and Byron and Tennyson;[76] of Raphael and Titian;[77] Mozart and Beethoven. It was, as it were, behind a veil; their poetry hit no one in the face, but slipped its fingers under the ribs and turned

and twisted, and melted up the heart. And, never certain that this was healthy, he did not care a rap so long as he could see the pictures of the one or hear the music of the other.

Irene sat down at the piano under the electric lamp festooned with pearl-grey, and old Jolyon, in an armchair, whence he could see her, crossed his legs and drew slowly at his cigar. She sat a few moments with her hands on the keys, evidently searching her mind for what to give him. Then she began and within old Jolyon there arose a sorrowful pleasure, not quite like anything else in the world. He fell slowly into a trance, interrupted only by the movements of taking the cigar out of his mouth at long intervals, and replacing it. She was there, and the hock within him, and the scent of tobacco; but there, too, was a world of sunshine lingering into moonlight, and pools with storks upon them, and bluish trees above, glowing with blurs of wine-red roses, and fields of lavender where milk-white cows were grazing, and a woman all shadowy, with dark eyes and a white neck, smiled, holding out her arms; and through air which was like music a star dropped and was caught on a cow's horn. He opened his eyes. Beautiful piece; she played well – the touch of an angel! And he closed them again. He felt miraculously sad and happy, as one does, standing under a lime-tree in full honey flower. Not live one's own life again, but just stand there and bask in the smile of a woman's eyes, and enjoy the bouquet! And he jerked his hand; the dog Balthasar had reached up and licked it.

'Beautiful!' He said: 'Go on – more Chopin!'

She began to play again. This time the resemblance between her and 'Chopin' struck him. The swaying he had noticed in her walk was in her playing too, and the Nocturne she had chosen and the soft darkness of her eyes, the light on her hair, as of moonlight from a golden moon. Seductive, yes; but nothing of Delilah[78] in her or in that music. A long blue spiral from his cigar ascended and dispersed. 'So we go out!' he thought. 'No more beauty! Nothing?'

Again Irene stopped.

'Would you like some Gluck? He used to write his music in a sunlit garden, with a bottle of Rhine wine beside him.'

'Ah! yes. Let's have "Orfeo."' Round about him now were fields of gold and silver flowers, white forms swaying in the sunlight, bright birds flying to and fro. All was summer. Lingering waves of sweetness and regret flooded his soul. Some cigar ash dropped, and taking out a silk handkerchief to brush it off, he inhaled a mingled scent as of snuff and eau de Cologne. 'Ah!' he thought, 'Indian summer – that's all!' and he said: 'You haven't played me "Che farò".[79]'

She did not answer; did not move. He was conscious of something – some strange upset. Suddenly he saw her rise and turn away, and a

pang of remorse shot through him. What a clumsy chap! Like Orpheus, she of course – she too was looking for her lost one in the hall of memory! And disturbed to the heart, he got up from his chair. She had gone to the great window at the far end. Gingerly he followed. Her hands were folded over her breast; he could just see her cheek, very white. And, quite emotionalized, he said:

'There, there, my love!' The words had escaped him mechanically, for they were those he used to Holly when she had a pain, but their effect was instantaneously distressing. She raised her arms, covered her face with them, and wept.

Old Jolyon stood gazing at her with eyes very deep from age. The passionate shame she seemed feeling at her abandonment, so unlike the control and quietude of her whole presence was as if she had never before broken down in the presence of another being.

'There, there – there, there!' he murmured, and putting his hand out reverently, touched her. She turned, and leaned the arms which covered her face against him. Old Jolyon stood very still, keeping one thin hand on her shoulder. Let her cry her heart out – it would do her good.

And the dog Balthasar, puzzled, sat down on his stern to examine them.

The window was still open, the curtains had not been drawn, the last of daylight from without mingled with faint intrusion from the lamp within; there was a scent of new – mown grass. With the wisdom of a long life old Jolyon did not speak. Even grief sobbed itself out in time; only Time was good for sorrow – Time who saw the passing of each mood, each emotion in turn; Time the layer-to-rest. There came into his mind the words: 'As panteth the hart after cooling streams' – but they were of no use to him. Then, conscious of a scent of violets, he knew she was drying her eyes. He put his chin forward, pressed his moustache against her forehead, and felt her shake with a quivering of her whole body, as of a tree which shakes itself free of raindrops. She put his hand to her lips, as if saying: 'All over now! Forgive me!'

The kiss filled him with a strange comfort; he led her back to where she had been so upset. And the dog Balthasar, following, laid the bone of one of the cutlets they had eaten at their feet.

Anxious to obliterate the memory of that emotion, he could think of nothing better than china; and moving with her slowly from cabinet to cabinet, he kept taking up bits of Dresden and Lowestoft and Chelsea, turning them round and round with his thin, veined hands, whose skin, faintly freckled, had such an aged look.

'I bought this at Jobson's,' he would say; 'cost me thirty pounds. It's very old. That dog leaves his bones all over the place. This old "ship-bowl" I picked up at the sale when that precious rip, the

Marquis, came to grief. But you don't remember. Here's a nice piece of Chelsea. Now, what would you say this was?' And he was comforted, feeling that, with her taste, she was taking a real interest in these things; for, after all, nothing better composes the nerves than a doubtful piece of china.

When the crunch of the carriage wheels was heard at last, he said:

'You must come again; you must come to lunch, then I can show you these by daylight, and my little sweet – she's a dear little thing. This dog seems to have taken a fancy to you.'

For Balthasar, feeling that she was about to leave, was rubbing his side against her leg. Going out under the porch with her, he said:

'He'll get you up in an hour and a quarter. Take this for your protégées,' and he slipped a cheque for fifty pounds into her hand. He saw her brightened eyes, and heard her murmur: 'Oh! Uncle Jolyon!' and a real throb of pleasure went through him. That meant one or two poor creatures helped a little, and it meant that she would come again. He put his hand in at the window and grasped hers once more. The carriage rolled away. He stood looking at the moon and the shadows of the trees, and thought: 'A sweet night! She……!'

II

Two days of rain, and summer set in bland and sunny. Old Jolyon walked and talked with Holly. At first he felt taller and full of a new vigour; then he felt restless. Almost every afternoon they would enter the coppice, and walk as far as the log. 'Well, she's not there!' he would think, 'of course not!' And he would feel a little shorter, and drag his feet walking up the hill home, with his hand clapped to his left side. Now and then the thought would move in him: 'Did she come – or did I dream it?' and he would stare at space, while the dog Balthasar stared at him. Of course she would not come again! He opened the letters from Spain with less excitement. They were not returning till July; he felt, oddly, that he could bear it. Every day at dinner he screwed up his eyes and looked at where she had sat. She was not there, so he unscrewed his eyes again.

On the seventh afternoon he thought: 'I must go up and get some boots.' He ordered Beacon, and set out. Passing from Putney[80] towards Hyde Park[81] he reflected: 'I might as well go to Chelsea and see her.' And he called out: 'Just drive me to where you took that lady the other night.' The coachman turned his broad red face, and his juicy lips answered: 'The lady in grey, sir?'

'Yes, the lady in grey.' What other ladies were there! Stodgy chap!

The carriage stopped before a small three-storied block of flats, standing a little back from the river. With a practised eye old Jolyon saw that they were cheap. 'I should think about sixty pound a year,' he mused; and entering, he looked at the name-board. The name 'Forsyte' was not on it, but against 'First Floor, Flat C' were the words: 'Mrs. Irene Heron.' Ah! She had taken her maiden name again! And somehow this pleased him. He went upstairs slowly, feeling his side a little. He stood a moment, before ringing, to lose the feeling of drag and fluttering there. She would not be in! And then – Boots! The thought was black. What did he want with boots at his age? He could not wear out all those he had.

'Your mistress at home?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Say Mr. Jolyon Forsyte.'

'Yes, sir, will you come this way?'

Old Jolyon followed a very little maid – not more than sixteen one would say – into a very small drawing-room where the sun-blinds were drawn. It held a cottage piano and little else save a vague fragrance and good taste. He stood in the middle, with his top hat in his hand, and thought: 'I expect she's very badly off!' There was a mirror above the fireplace, and he saw himself reflected. An old-

looking chap! He heard a rustle, and turned round. She was so close that his moustache almost brushed her forehead, just under her hair.

'I was driving up,' he said. 'Thought I'd look in on you, and ask you how you got up the other night.'

And, seeing her smile, he felt suddenly relieved. She was really glad to see him, perhaps.

'Would you like to put on your hat and come for a drive in the Park?'

But while she was gone to put her hat on, he frowned. The Park! James and Emily! Mrs. Nicholas, or some other member of his precious family would be there very likely, prancing up and down. And they would go and wag their tongues about having seen him with her, afterwards. Better not! He did not wish to revive the echoes of the past on Forsyte "Change." He removed a white hair from the lapel of his closely-buttoned-up frock coat, and passed his hand over his cheeks, moustache, and square chin. It felt very hollow there under the cheekbones. He had not been eating much lately – he had better get that little whippersnapper who attended Holly to give him a tonic. But she had come back and when they were in the carriage, he said:

'Suppose we go and sit in Kensington Gardens[82] instead?' and added with a twinkle: 'No prancing up and down there,' as if she had been in the secret of his thoughts.

Leaving the carriage, they entered those select precincts, and strolled towards the water.

'You've gone back to your maiden name, I see,' he said: 'I'm not sorry.'

She slipped her hand under his arm: 'Has June forgiven me, Uncle Jolyon?'

He answered gently: 'Yes – yes; of course, why not?'

'And have you?'

'I? I forgave you as soon as I saw how the land really lay.' And perhaps he had; his instinct had always been to forgive the beautiful.

She drew a deep breath. 'I never regretted – I couldn't. Did you ever love very deeply, Uncle Jolyon?'

At that strange question old Jolyon stared before him. Had he? He did not seem to remember that he ever had. But he did not like to say this to the young woman whose hand was touching his arm, whose life was suspended, as it were, by memory of a tragic love. And he thought: 'If I had met you when I was young I–I might have made a fool of myself, perhaps.' And a longing to escape in generalities beset him.

'Love's a queer thing,' he said, 'fatal thing often. It was the Greeks – wasn't it? – made love into a goddess; they were right, I dare say, but then they lived in the Golden Age.'

‘Phil adored them.’

Phil! The word jarred him, for suddenly – with his power to see all round a thing, he perceived why she was putting up with him like this. She wanted to talk about her lover! Well! If it was any pleasure to her! And he said: ‘Ah! There was a bit of the sculptor in him, I fancy.’

‘Yes. He loved balance and symmetry; he loved the whole-hearted way the Greeks gave themselves to art.’

Balance! The chap had no balance at all, if he remembered; as for symmetry – clean-built enough he was, no doubt; but those queer eyes of his, and high cheek-bones – Symmetry?

‘You’re of the Golden Age, too, Uncle Jolyon.’

Old Jolyon looked round at her. Was she chaffing him? No, her eyes were soft as velvet. Was she flattering him? But if so, why? There was nothing to be had out of an old chap like him.

‘Phil thought so. He used to say: “But I can never tell him that I admire him.” ’

Ah! There it was again. Her dead lover; her desire to talk of him! And he pressed her arm, half resentful of those memories, half grateful, as if he recognised what a link they were between herself and him.

‘He was a very talented young fellow,’ he murmured. ‘It’s hot; I feel the heat nowadays. Let’s sit down.’

They took two chairs beneath a chestnut tree whose broad leaves covered them from the peaceful glory of the afternoon. A pleasure to sit there and watch her, and feel that she liked to be with him. And the wish to increase that liking, if he could, made him go on:

‘I expect he showed you a side of him I never saw. He’d be at his best with you. His ideas of art were a little new – to me’ – he had stiffed the word ‘fangled.’

‘Yes: but he used to say you had a real sense of beauty.’ Old Jolyon thought: ‘The devil he did!’ but answered with a twinkle: ‘Well, I have, or I shouldn’t be sitting here with you.’ She was fascinating when she smiled with her eyes, like that!

‘He thought you had one of those hearts that never grow old. Phil had real insight.’

He was not taken in by this flattery spoken out of the past, out of a longing to talk of her dead lover – not a bit; and yet it was precious to hear, because she pleased his eyes and heart which – quite true! – had never grown old. Was that because – unlike her and her dead lover, he had never loved to desperation, had always kept his balance, his sense of symmetry. Well! It had left him power, at eighty-four, to admire beauty. And he thought, ‘If I were a painter or a sculptor! But I’m an old chap. Make hay while the sun shines.[83]’

A couple with arms entwined crossed on the grass before them, at the edge of the shadow from their tree. The sunlight fell cruelly on their pale, squashed, unkempt young faces. 'We're an ugly lot!' said old Jolyon suddenly. 'It amazes me to see how – love triumphs over that.'

'Love triumphs over everything!'

'The young think so,' he muttered.

'Love has no age, no limit, and no death.'

With that glow in her pale face, her breast heaving, her eyes so large and dark and soft, she looked like Venus come to life! But this extravagance brought instant reaction, and, twinkling, he said: 'Well, if it had limits, we shouldn't be born; for by George! it's got a lot to put up with.'

Then, removing his top hat, he brushed it round with a cuff. The great clumsy thing heated his forehead; in these days he often got a rush of blood to the head – his circulation was not what it had been.

She still sat gazing straight before her, and suddenly she murmured:

'It's strange enough that I'm alive.'

Those words of Jo's 'Wild and lost' came back to him.

'Ah!' he said: 'my son saw you for a moment – that day.'

'Was it your son? I heard a voice in the hall; I thought for a second it was – Phil.'

Old Jolyon saw her lips tremble. She put her hand over them, took it away again, and went on calmly: 'That night I went to the Embankment; a woman caught me by the dress. She told me about herself. When one knows that others suffer, one's ashamed.'

'One of those?'

She nodded, and horror stirred within old Jolyon, the horror of one who has never known a struggle with desperation. Almost against his will he muttered: 'Tell me, won't you?'

'I didn't care whether I lived or died. When you're like that, Fate ceases to want to kill you. She took care of me three days – she never left me. I had no money. That's why I do what I can for them, now.'

But old Jolyon was thinking: 'No money!' What fate could compare with that? Every other was involved in it.

'I wish you had come to me,' he said. 'Why didn't you?' But Irene did not answer.

'Because my name was Forsyte, I suppose? Or was it June who kept you away? How are you getting on now?' His eyes involuntarily swept her body. Perhaps even now she was —! And yet she wasn't thin – not really!

'Oh! with my fifty pounds a year, I make just enough.' The answer did not reassure him; he had lost confidence. And that fellow Soames!

But his sense of justice stifled condemnation. No, she would certainly have died rather than take another penny from him. Soft as she looked, there must be strength in her somewhere – strength and fidelity. But what business had young Bosinney to have got run over and left her stranded like this!

'Well, you must come to me now,' he said, 'for anything you want, or I shall be quite cut up.' And putting on his hat, he rose. 'Let's go and get some tea. I told that lazy chap to put the horses up for an hour, and come for me at your place. We'll take a cab presently; I can't walk as I used to.'

He enjoyed that stroll to the Kensington end of the gardens – the sound of her voice, the glancing of her eyes, the subtle beauty of a charming form moving beside him. He enjoyed their tea at Ruffel's in the High Street,[84] and came out thence with a great box of chocolates swung on his little finger. He enjoyed the drive back to Chelsea in a hansom, smoking his cigar. She had promised to come down next Sunday and play to him again, and already in thought he was plucking carnations and early roses for her to carry back to town. It was a pleasure to give her a little pleasure, if it *were* pleasure from an old chap like him! The carriage was already there when they arrived. Just like that fellow, who was always late when he was wanted! Old Jolyon went in for a minute to say good-bye. The little dark hall of the flat was impregnated with a disagreeable odour of patchouli, and on a bench against the wall – its only furniture – he saw a figure sitting. He heard Irene say softly: 'Just one minute.' In the little drawing-room when the door was shut, he asked gravely: 'One of your protegees?'

'Yes. Now thanks to you, I can do something for her.'

He stood, staring, and stroking that chin whose strength had frightened so many in its time. The idea of her thus actually in contact with this outcast grieved and frightened him. What could she do for them? Nothing. Only soil and make trouble for herself, perhaps. And he said: 'Take care, my dear! The world puts the worst construction on everything.'

'I know that.'

He was abashed by her quiet smile. 'Well then – Sunday,' he murmured: 'Good-bye.'

She put her cheek forward for him to kiss.

'Good-bye,' he said again; 'take care of yourself.' And he went out, not looking towards the figure on the bench. He drove home by way of Hammersmith;[85] that he might stop at a place he knew of and tell them to send her in two dozen of their best Burgundy.[86] She must want picking-up sometimes! Only in Richmond Park[87] did he remember that he had gone up to order himself some boots, and was

surprised that he could have had so paltry an idea.

III

The little spirits of the past which throng an old man's days had never pushed their faces up to his so seldom as in the seventy hours elapsing before Sunday came. The spirit of the future, with the charm of the unknown, put up her lips instead. Old Jolyon was not restless now, and paid no visits to the log, because she was coming to lunch. There is wonderful finality about a meal; it removes a world of doubts, for no one misses meals except for reasons beyond control. He played many games with Holly on the lawn, pitching them up to her who was batting so as to be ready to bowl to Jolly in the holidays. For she was not a Forsyte, but Jolly was – and Forsytes always bat, until they have resigned and reached the age of eighty-five. The dog Balthasar, in attendance, lay on the ball as often as he could, and the page-boy fielded, till his face was like the harvest moon. And because the time was getting shorter, each day was longer and more golden than the last. On Friday night he took a liver pill, his side hurt him rather, and though it was not the liver side, there is no remedy like that. Anyone telling him that he had found a new excitement in life and that excitement was not good for him, would have been met by one of those steady and rather defiant looks of his deep-set iron-grey eyes, which seemed to say: 'I know my own business best.' He always had and always would.

On Sunday morning, when Holly had gone with her governess to church, he visited the strawberry beds. There, accompanied by the dog Balthasar, he examined the plants narrowly and succeeded in finding at least two dozen berries which were really ripe. Stooping was not good for him, and he became very dizzy and red in the forehead. Having placed the strawberries in a dish on the dining-table, he washed his hands and bathed his forehead with eau de Cologne. There, before the mirror, it occurred to him that he was thinner. What a 'threadpaper' he had been when he was young! It was nice to be slim – he could not bear a fat chap; and yet perhaps his cheeks were too thin! She was to arrive by train at half-past twelve and walk up, entering from the road past Drage's farm at the far end of the coppice. And, having looked into June's room to see that there was hot water ready, he set forth to meet her, leisurely, for his heart was beating. The air smelled sweet, larks sang, and the Grand Stand at Epsom was visible. A perfect day! On just such a one, no doubt, six years ago, Soames had brought young Bosinney down with him to look at the site before they began to build. It was Bosinney who had pitched on the exact spot for the house – as June had often told him. In these days he was thinking much about that young fellow, as if his spirit

were really haunting the field of his last work, on the chance of seeing – her. Bosinney – the one man who had possessed her heart, to whom she had given her whole self with rapture! At his age one could not, of course, imagine such things, but there stirred in him a queer vague aching – as it were the ghost of an impersonal jealousy; and a feeling, too, more generous, of pity for that love so early lost. All over in a few poor months! Well, well! He looked at his watch before entering the coppice – only a quarter past, twenty-five minutes to wait! And then, turning the corner of the path, he saw her exactly where he had seen her the first time, on the log; and realised that she must have come by the earlier train to sit there alone for a couple of hours at least. Two hours of her society missed! What memory could make that log so dear to her? His face showed what he was thinking, for she said at once:

'Forgive me, Uncle Jolyon; it was here that I first knew.'

'Yes, yes; there it is for you whenever you like. You're looking a little Londony; you're giving too many lessons.'

That she should have to give lessons worried him. Lessons to a parcel of young girls thumping out scales with their thick fingers.

'Where do you go to give them?' he asked.

'They're mostly Jewish families, luckily.'

Old Jolyon stared; to all Forsytes Jews seem strange and doubtful.

'They love music, and they're very kind.'

'They had better be, by George!' He took her arm – his side always hurt him a little going uphill – and said:

'Did you ever see anything like those buttercups? They came like that in a night.'

Her eyes seemed really to fly over the field, like bees after the flowers and the honey. 'I wanted you to see them – wouldn't let them turn the cows in yet.' Then, remembering that she had come to talk about Bosinney, he pointed to the clock-tower over the stables:

'I expect he wouldn't have let me put that there – had no notion of time, if I remember.'

But, pressing his arm to her, she talked of flowers instead, and he knew it was done that he might not feel she came because of her dead lover.

'The best flower I can show you,' he said, with a sort of triumph, 'is my little sweet. She'll be back from Church directly. There's something about her which reminds me a little of you,' and it did not seem to him peculiar that he had put it thus, instead of saying: 'There's something about you which reminds me a little of her.' Ah! And here she was!

Holly, followed closely by her elderly French governess, whose digestion had been ruined twenty-two years ago in the siege of

Strasbourg,[88] came rushing towards them from under the oak tree. She stopped about a dozen yards away, to pat Balthasar and pretend that this was all she had in her mind. Old Jolyon, who knew better, said:

'Well, my darling, here's the lady in grey I promised you.'

Holly raised herself and looked up. He watched the two of them with a twinkle, Irene smiling, Holly beginning with grave inquiry, passing into a shy smile too, and then to something deeper. She had a sense of beauty, that child – knew what was what! He enjoyed the sight of the kiss between them.

'Mrs. Heron, Mam'zelle Beauce. Well, Mam'zelle – good sermon?'

For, now that he had not much more time before him, the only part of the service connected with this world absorbed what interest in church remained to him. Mam'zelle Beauce stretched out a spidery hand clad in a black kid glove – she had been in the best families – and the rather sad eyes of her lean yellowish face seemed to ask: 'Are you well-brrred?' Whenever Holly or Jolly did anything unpleasing to her – a not uncommon occurrence – she would say to them: 'The little Tayleurs never did that – they were such well-brrred little children.' Jolly hated the little Tayleurs; Holly wondered dreadfully how it was she fell so short of them. 'A thin rum little soul,' old Jolyon thought her – Mam'zelle Beauce.

Luncheon was a successful meal, the mushrooms which he himself had picked in the mushroom house, his chosen strawberries, and another bottle of the Steinberg cabinet filled him with a certain aromatic spirituality, and a conviction that he would have a touch of eczema to-morrow.

After lunch they sat under the oak tree drinking Turkish coffee. It was no matter of grief to him when Mademoiselle Beauce withdrew to write her Sunday letter to her sister, whose future had been endangered in the past by swallowing a pin – an event held up daily in warning to the children to eat slowly and digest what they had eaten. At the foot of the bank, on a carriage rug, Holly and the dog Balthasar teased and loved each other, and in the shade old Jolyon with his legs crossed and his cigar luxuriously savoured, gazed at Irene sitting in the swing. A light, vaguely swaying, grey figure with a fleck of sunlight here and there upon it, lips just opened, eyes dark and soft under lids a little drooped. She looked content; surely it did her good to come and see him! The selfishness of age had not set its proper grip on him, for he could still feel pleasure in the pleasure of others, realising that what he wanted, though much, was not quite all that mattered.

'It's quiet here,' he said; 'you mustn't come down if you find it dull. But it's a pleasure to see you. My little sweet is the only face

which gives me any pleasure, except yours.'

From her smile he knew that she was not beyond liking to be appreciated, and this reassured him. 'That's not humbug,' he said. 'I never told a woman I admired her when I didn't. In fact I don't know when I've told a woman I admired her, except my wife in the old days; and wives are funny.' He was silent, but resumed abruptly:

'She used to expect me to say it more often than I felt it, and there we were.' Her face looked mysteriously troubled, and, afraid that he had said something painful, he hurried on: 'When my little sweet marries, I hope she'll find someone who knows what women feel. I shan't be here to see it, but there's too much topsy-turvydom in marriage; I don't want her to pitch up against that.' And, aware that he had made bad worse, he added: 'That dog will scratch.'

A silence followed. Of what was she thinking, this pretty creature whose life was spoiled; who had done with love, and yet was made for love? Some day when he was gone, perhaps, she would find another mate – not so disorderly as that young fellow who had got himself run over. Ah! but her husband?

'Does Soames never trouble you?' he asked.

She shook her head. Her face had closed up suddenly. For all her softness there was something irreconcilable about her. And a glimpse of light on the inexorable nature of sex antipathies strayed into a brain which, belonging to early Victorian civilization – so much older than this of his old age – had never thought about such primitive things.

'That's a comfort,' he said. 'You can see the Grand Stand to-day. Shall we take a turn round?'

Through the flower and fruit garden, against whose high outer walls peach trees and nectarines were trained to the sun, through the stables, the vinery, the mushroom house, the asparagus beds, the rosery, the summer-house, he conducted her – even into the kitchen garden to see the tiny green peas which Holly loved to scoop out of their pods with her finger, and lick up from the palm of her little brown hand. Many delightful things he showed her, while Holly and the dog Balthasar danced ahead, or came to them at intervals for attention. It was one of the happiest afternoons he had ever spent, but it tired him and he was glad to sit down in the music room and let her give him tea. A special little friend of Holly's had come in – a fair child with short hair like a boy's. And the two sported in the distance, under the stairs, on the stairs, and up in the gallery. Old Jolyon begged for Chopin. She played studies, mazurkas, waltzes, till the two children, creeping near, stood at the foot of the piano their dark and golden heads bent forward, listening. Old Jolyon watched.

'Let's see you dance, you two!'

Shyly, with a false start, they began. Bobbing and circling,

earnest, not very adroit, they went past and past his chair to the strains of that waltz. He watched them and the face of her who was playing turned smiling towards those little dancers thinking:

'Sweetest picture I've seen for ages.'

A voice said:

'Hollee! Mais enfin – qu'est – ce que tu fais la – danser, le dimanche! Viens, donc!'[89]

But the children came close to old Jolyon, knowing that he would save them, and gazed into a face which was decidedly 'caught out.'

'Better the day, better the deed, Mam'zelle. It's all my doing. Trot along, chicks, and have your tea.'

And, when they were gone, followed by the dog Balthasar, who took every meal, he looked at Irene with a twinkle and said:

'Well, there we are! Aren't they sweet? Have you any little ones among your pupils?'

'Yes, three – two of them darlings.'

'Pretty?'

'Lovely!'

Old Jolyon sighed; he had an insatiable appetite for the very young. 'My little sweet,' he said, 'is devoted to music; she'll be a musician some day. You wouldn't give me your opinion of her playing, I suppose?'

'Of course I will.'

'You wouldn't like – ' but he stifled the words 'to give her lessons.' The idea that she gave lessons was unpleasant to him; yet it would mean that he would see her regularly. She left the piano and came over to his chair.

'I would like, very much; but there is – June. When are they coming back?'

Old Jolyon frowned. 'Not till the middle of next month. What does that matter?'

'You said June had forgiven me; but she could never forget, Uncle Jolyon.'

Forget! She must forget, if he wanted her to.

But as if answering, Irene shook her head. 'You know she couldn't; one doesn't forget.'

Always that wretched past! And he said with a sort of vexed finality:

'Well, we shall see.'

He talked to her an hour or more, of the children, and a hundred little things, till the carriage came round to take her home. And when she had gone he went back to his chair, and sat there smoothing his face and chin, dreaming over the day.

That evening after dinner he went to his study and took a sheet of

paper. He stayed for some minutes without writing, then rose and stood under the masterpiece 'Dutch Fishing Boats at Sunset.' He was not thinking of that picture, but of his life. He was going to leave her something in his Will; nothing could so have stirred the stilly deeps of thought and memory. He was going to leave her a portion of his wealth, of his aspirations, deeds, qualities, work – all that had made that wealth; going to leave her, too, a part of all he had missed in life, by his sane and steady pursuit of wealth. All! What had he missed? 'Dutch Fishing Boats' responded blankly; he crossed to the French window, and drawing the curtain aside, opened it. A wind had got up, and one of last year's oak leaves which had somehow survived the gardener's brooms, was dragging itself with a tiny clicking rustle along the stone terrace in the twilight. Except for that it was very quiet out there, and he could smell the heliotrope watered not long since. A bat went by. A bird uttered its last 'cheep.' And right above the oak tree the first star shone. Faust in the opera had bartered his soul for some fresh years of youth. Morbid notion! No such bargain was possible, that was real tragedy! No making oneself new again for love or life or anything. Nothing left to do but enjoy beauty from afar off while you could, and leave it something in your Will. But how much? And, as if he could not make that calculation looking out into the mild freedom of the country night, he turned back and went up to the chimney-piece. There were his pet bronzes – a Cleopatra[90] with the asp at her breast; a Socrates;[91] a greyhound playing with her puppy; a strong man reining in some horses. 'They last!' he thought, and a pang went through his heart. They had a thousand years of life before them!

'How much?' Well! enough at all events to save her getting old before her time, to keep the lines out of her face as long as possible, and grey from soiling that bright hair. He might live another five years. She would be well over thirty by then. 'How much?' She had none of his blood in her! In loyalty to the tenor of his life for forty years and more, ever since he married and founded that mysterious thing, a family, came this warning thought – None of his blood, no right to anything! It was a luxury then, this notion. An extravagance, a petting of an old man's whim, one of those things done in dotage. His real future was vested in those who had his blood, in whom he would live on when he was gone. He turned away from the bronzes and stood looking at the old leather chair in which he had sat and smoked so many hundreds of cigars. And suddenly he seemed to see her sitting there in her grey dress, fragrant, soft, dark-eyed, graceful, looking up at him. Why! She cared nothing for him, really; all she cared for was that lost lover of hers. But she was there, whether she would or no, giving him pleasure with her beauty and grace. One had no right to inflict an old man's company, no right to ask her down to play to him

and let him look at her – for no reward! Pleasure must be paid for in this world. ‘How much?’ After all, there was plenty; his son and his three grandchildren would never miss that little lump. He had made it himself, nearly every penny; he could leave it where he liked, allow himself this little pleasure. He went back to the bureau. ‘Well, I’m going to,’ he thought, ‘let them think what they like. I’m going to!’ And he sat down.

‘How much?’ Ten thousand, twenty thousand – how much? If only with his money he could buy one year, one month of youth. And startled by that thought, he wrote quickly:

> ‘DEAR HERRING, —
>
> ‘Draw me a codicil[92] to this effect: “I leave to my niece Irene Forsyte, born Irene Heron, by which name she now goes, fifteen thousand pounds free of legacy duty.”
>
> *‘Yours faithfully,*
>
> *‘JOLYON FORSYTE.’*

When he had sealed and stamped the envelope, he went back to the window and drew in a long breath. It was dark, but many stars shone now.

IV

He woke at half-past two, an hour which long experience had taught him brings panic intensity to all awkward thoughts. Experience had also taught him that a further waking at the proper hour of eight showed the folly of such panic. On this particular morning the thought which gathered rapid momentum was that if he became ill, at his age not improbable, he would not see her. From this it was but a step to realisation that he would be cut off, too, when his son and June returned from Spain. How could he justify desire for the company of one who had stolen – early morning does not mince words – June's lover? That lover was dead; but June was a stubborn little thing; warm-hearted, but stubborn as wood, and – quite true – not one who forgot! By the middle of next month they would be back. He had barely five weeks left to enjoy the new interest which had come into what remained of his life. Darkness showed up to him absurdly clear the nature of his feeling. Admiration for beauty – a craving to see that which delighted his eyes.

Preposterous, at his age! And yet – what other reason was there for asking June to undergo such painful reminder, and how prevent his son and his son's wife from thinking him very queer? He would be reduced to sneaking up to London, which tired him; and the least indisposition would cut him off even from that. He lay with eyes open, setting his jaw against the prospect, and calling himself an old fool, while his heart beat loudly, and then seemed to stop beating altogether. He had seen the dawn lighting the window chinks, heard the birds chirp and twitter, and the cocks crow, before he fell asleep again, and awoke tired but sane. Five weeks before he need bother, at his age an eternity! But that early morning panic had left its mark, had slightly fevered the will of one who had always had his own way. He would see her as often as he wished! Why not go up to town and make that codicil at his solicitor's instead of writing about it; she might like to go to the opera! But, by train, for he would not have that fat chap Beacon grinning behind his back. Servants were such fools; and, as likely as not, they had known all the past history of Irene and young Bosinney – servants knew everything, and suspected the rest. He wrote to her that morning:

> 'MY DEAR IRENE,
>
> 'I have to be up in town to-morrow. If you would like to have a look in at the opera, come and dine with me quietly…'

But where? It was decades since he had dined anywhere

in London save at his Club or at a private house. Ah! that new-fangled place close to Covent Garden…

'Let me have a line to-morrow morning to the Piedmont Hotel whether to expect you there at 7 o'clock.

'Yours affectionately,

'JOLYON FORSYTE.'

She would understand that he just wanted to give her a little pleasure; for the idea that she should guess he had this itch to see her was instinctively unpleasant to him; it was not seemly that one so old should go out of his way to see beauty, especially in a woman.

The journey next day, short though it was, and the visit to his lawyer's, tired him. It was hot too, and after dressing for dinner he lay down on the sofa in his bedroom to rest a little. He must have had a sort of fainting fit, for he came to himself feeling very queer; and with some difficulty rose and rang the bell. Why! it was past seven! And there he was and she would be waiting. But suddenly the dizziness came on again, and he was obliged to relapse on the sofa. He heard the maid's voice say:

'Did you ring, sir?'

'Yes, come here'; he could not see her clearly, for the cloud in front of his eyes. 'I'm not well, I want some sal volatile.[93]'

'Yes, sir.' Her voice sounded frightened.

Old Jolyon made an effort.

'Don't go. Take this message to my niece – a lady waiting in the hall – a lady in grey. Say Mr. Forsyte is not well – the heat. He is very sorry; if he is not down directly, she is not to wait dinner.'

When she was gone, he thought feebly: 'Why did I say a lady in grey – she may be in anything. Sal volatile!' He did not go off again, yet was not conscious of how Irene came to be standing beside him, holding smelling salts to his nose, and pushing a pillow up behind his head. He heard her say anxiously: 'Dear Uncle Jolyon, what is it?' was dimly conscious of the soft pressure of her lips on his hand; then drew a long breath of smelling salts, suddenly discovered strength in them, and sneezed.

'Ha!' he said, 'it's nothing. How did you get here? Go down and dine – the tickets are on the dressing-table. I shall be all right in a minute.'

He felt her cool hand on his forehead, smelled violets, and sat divided between a sort of pleasure and a determination to be all right.

'Why! You are in grey!' he said. 'Help me up.' Once on his feet he gave himself a shake.

'What business had I to go off like that!' And he moved very

slowly to the glass. What a cadaverous chap! Her voice, behind him, murmured:

'You mustn't come down, Uncle; you must rest.'

'Fiddlesticks! A glass of champagne'll soon set me to rights. I can't have you missing the opera.'

But the journey down the corridor was troublesome. What carpets they had in these newfangled places, so thick that you tripped up in them at every step! In the lift he noticed how concerned she looked, and said with the ghost of a twinkle:

'I'm a pretty host.'

When the lift stopped he had to hold firmly to the seat to prevent its slipping under him; but after soup and a glass of champagne he felt much better, and began to enjoy an infirmity which had brought such solicitude into her manner towards him.

'I should have liked you for a daughter,' he said suddenly; and watching the smile in her eyes, went on:

'You mustn't get wrapped up in the past at your time of life; plenty of that when you get to my age. That's a nice dress – I like the style.'

'I made it myself.'

Ah! A woman who could make herself a pretty frock had not lost her interest in life.

'Make hay while the sun shines,' he said; 'and drink that up. I want to see some colour in your cheeks. We mustn't waste life; it doesn't do. There's a new Marguerite[94] to-night; let's hope she won't be fat. And Mephisto[95] – anything more dreadful than a fat chap playing the Devil I can't imagine.'

But they did not go to the opera after all, for in getting up from dinner the dizziness came over him again, and she insisted on his staying quiet and going to bed early. When he parted from her at the door of the hotel, having paid the cabman to drive her to Chelsea, he sat down again for a moment to enjoy the memory of her words: 'You are such a darling to me, Uncle Jolyon!' Why! Who wouldn't be! He would have liked to stay up another day and take her to the Zoo, but two days running of him would bore her to death. No, he must wait till next Sunday; she had promised to come then. They would settle those lessons for Holly, if only for a month. It would be something. That little Mam'zelle Beauce wouldn't like it, but she would have to lump it. And crushing his old opera hat against his chest he sought the lift.

He drove to Waterloo[96] next morning, struggling with a desire to say: 'Drive me to Chelsea.' But his sense of proportion was too strong. Besides, he still felt shaky, and did not want to risk another aberration like that of last night, away from home. Holly, too, was

expecting him, and what he had in his bag for her. Not that there was any cupboard love in his little sweet – she was a bundle of affection. Then, with the rather bitter cynicism of the old, he wondered for a second whether it was not cupboard love which made Irene put up with him. No, she was not that sort either. She had, if anything, too little notion of how to butter her bread, no sense of property, poor thing! Besides, he had not breathed a word about that codicil, nor should he – sufficient unto the day was the good thereof.

In the victoria[97] which met him at the station Holly was restraining the dog Balthasar, and their caresses made 'jubey'[98] his drive home. All the rest of that fine hot day and most of the next he was content and peaceful, reposing in the shade, while the long lingering sunshine showered gold on the lawns and the flowers. But on Thursday evening at his lonely dinner he began to count the hours; sixty-five till he would go down to meet her again in the little coppice, and walk up through the fields at her side. He had intended to consult the doctor about his fainting fit, but the fellow would be sure to insist on quiet, no excitement and all that; and he did not mean to be tied by the leg, did not want to be told of an infirmity – if there were one, could not afford to hear of it at his time of life, now that this new interest had come. And he carefully avoided making any mention of it in a letter to his son. It would only bring them back with a run! How far this silence was due to consideration for their pleasure, how far to regard for his own, he did not pause to consider.

That night in his study he had just finished his cigar and was dozing off, when he heard the rustle of a gown, and was conscious of a scent of violets. Opening his eyes he saw her, dressed in grey, standing by the fireplace, holding out her arms. The odd thing was that, though those arms seemed to hold nothing, they were curved as if round someone's neck, and her own neck was bent back, her lips open, her eyes closed. She vanished at once, and there were the mantelpiece and his bronzes. But those bronzes and the mantelpiece had not been there when she was, only the fireplace and the wall! Shaken and troubled, he got up. 'I must take medicine,' he thought; 'I can't be well.' His heart beat too fast, he had an asthmatic feeling in the chest; and going to the window, he opened it to get some air. A dog was barking far away, one of the dogs at Gage's farm no doubt, beyond the coppice. A beautiful still night, but dark. 'I dropped off,' he mused, 'that's it! And yet I'll swear my eyes were open!' A sound like a sigh seemed to answer.

'What's that?' he said sharply, 'who's there?'

Putting his hand to his side to still the beating of his heart, he stepped out on the terrace. Something soft scurried by in the dark. 'Shoo!' It was that great grey cat. 'Young Bosinney was like a great

cat!' he thought. 'It was him in there, that she – that she was – He's got her still!' He walked to the edge of the terrace, and looked down into the darkness; he could just see the powdering of the daisies on the unmown lawn. Here to-day and gone to-morrow! And there came the moon, who saw all, young and old, alive and dead, and didn't care a dump! His own turn soon. For a single day of youth he would give what was left! And he turned again towards the house. He could see the windows of the night nursery up there. His little sweet would be asleep. 'Hope that dog won't wake her!' he thought. 'What is it makes us love, and makes us die! I must go to bed.'

And across the terrace stones, growing grey in the moonlight, he passed back within.

V

How should an old man live his days if not in dreaming of his well-spent past? In that, at all events, there is no agitating warmth, only pale winter sunshine. The shell can withstand the gentle beating of the dynamos of memory. The present he should distrust; the future shun. From beneath thick shade he should watch the sunlight creeping at his toes. If there be sun of summer, let him not go out into it, mistaking it for the Indian-summer sun! Thus peradventure he shall decline softly, slowly, imperceptibly, until impatient Nature clutches his wind-pipe and he gasps away to death some early morning before the world is aired, and they put on his tombstone: 'In the fulness of years!' yea! If he preserve his principles in perfect order, a Forsyte may live on long after he is dead.

Old Jolyon was conscious of all this, and yet there was in him that which transcended Forsyteism. For it is written that a Forsyte shall not love beauty more than reason; nor his own way more than his own health. And something beat within him in these days that with each throb fretted at the thinning shell. His sagacity knew this, but it knew too that he could not stop that beating, nor would if he could. And yet, if you had told him he was living on his capital, he would have stared you down. No, no; a man did not live on his capital; it was not done! The shibboleths of the past are ever more real than the actualities of the present. And he, to whom living on one's capital had always been anathema, could not have borne to have applied so gross a phrase to his own case. Pleasure is healthful; beauty good to see; to live again in the youth of the young – and what else on earth was he doing!

Methodically, as had been the way of his whole life, he now arranged his time. On Tuesdays he journeyed up to town by train; Irene came and dined with him. And they went to the opera. On Thursdays he drove to town, and, putting that fat chap and his horses up, met her in Kensington Gardens, picking up the carriage after he had left her, and driving home again in time for dinner. He threw out the casual formula that he had business in London on those two days. On Wednesdays and Saturdays she came down to give Holly music lessons. The greater the pleasure he took in her society, the more scrupulously fastidious he became, just a matter-of-fact and friendly uncle. Not even in feeling, really, was he more – for, after all, there was his age. And yet, if she were late he fidgeted himself to death. If she missed coming, which happened twice, his eyes grew sad as an old dog's, and he failed to sleep.

And so a month went by – a month of summer in the fields, and

in his heart, with summer's heat and the fatigue thereof. Who could have believed a few weeks back that he would have looked forward to his son's and his grand-daughter's return with something like dread! There was such a delicious freedom, such recovery of that independence a man enjoys before he founds a family, about these weeks of lovely weather, and this new companionship with one who demanded nothing, and remained always a little unknown, retaining the fascination of mystery. It was like a draught of wine to him who has been drinking water for so long that he has almost forgotten the stir wine brings to his blood, the narcotic to his brain. The flowers were coloured brighter, scents and music and the sunlight had a living value – were no longer mere reminders of past enjoyment. There was something now to live for which stirred him continually to anticipation. He lived in that, not in retrospection; the difference is considerable to any so old as he. The pleasures of the table, never of much consequence to one naturally abstemious, had lost all value. He ate little, without knowing what he ate; and every day grew thinner and more worn to look at. He was again a 'threadpaper'; and to this thinned form his massive forehead, with hollows at the temples, gave more dignity than ever. He was very well aware that he ought to see the doctor, but liberty was too sweet. He could not afford to pet his frequent shortness of breath and the pain in his side at the expense of liberty. Return to the vegetable existence he had led among the agricultural journals with the life-size mangold wurzels, before this new attraction came into his life – no! He exceeded his allowance of cigars. Two a day had always been his rule. Now he smoked three and sometimes four – a man will when he is filled with the creative spirit. But very often he thought: 'I must give up smoking, and coffee; I must give up rattling up to town.' But he did not; there was no one in any sort of authority to notice him, and this was a priceless boon.

The servants perhaps wondered, but they were, naturally, dumb. Mam'zelle Beauce was too concerned with her own digestion, and too 'wellbrrred' to make personal allusions. Holly had not as yet an eye for the relative appearance of him who was her plaything and her god. It was left for Irene herself to beg him to eat more, to rest in the hot part of the day, to take a tonic, and so forth. But she did not tell him that she was a cause of his thinness – for one cannot see the havoc oneself is working. A man of eighty-five has no passions, but the Beauty which produces passion works on in the old way, till death closes the eyes which crave the sight of Her.

On the first day of the second week in July he received a letter from his son in Paris to say that they would all be back on Friday. This had always been more sure than Fate; but, with the pathetic improvidence given to the old, that they may endure to the end, he

had never quite admitted it. Now he did, and something would have to be done. He had ceased to be able to imagine life without this new interest, but that which is not imagined sometimes exists, as Forsytes are perpetually finding to their cost. He sat in his old leather chair, doubling up the letter, and mumbling with his lips the end of an unlighted cigar. After to-morrow his Tuesday expeditions to town would have to be abandoned. He could still drive up, perhaps, once a week, on the pretext of seeing his man of business. But even that would be dependent on his health, for now they would begin to fuss about him. The lessons! The lessons must go on! She must swallow down her scruples, and June must put her feelings in her pocket. She had done so once, on the day after the news of Bosinney's death; what she had done then, she could surely do again now. Four years since that injury was inflicted on her – not Christian to keep the memory of old sores alive. June's will was strong, but his was stronger, for his sands were running out. Irene was soft, surely she would do this for him, subdue her natural shrinking, sooner than give him pain! The lessons must continue; for if they did, he was secure. And lighting his cigar at last, he began trying to shape out how to put it to them all, and explain this strange intimacy; how to veil and wrap it away from the naked truth – that he could not bear to be deprived of the sight of beauty. Ah! Holly! Holly was fond of her, Holly liked her lessons. She would save him – his little sweet! And with that happy thought he became serene, and wondered what he had been worrying about so fearfully. He must not worry, it left him always curiously weak, and as if but half present in his own body.

That evening after dinner he had a return of the dizziness, though he did not faint. He would not ring the bell, because he knew it would mean a fuss, and make his going up on the morrow more conspicuous. When one grew old, the whole world was in conspiracy to limit freedom, and for what reason? – just to keep the breath in him a little longer. He did not want it at such cost. Only the dog Balthasar saw his lonely recovery from that weakness; anxiously watched his master go to the sideboard and drink some brandy, instead of giving him a biscuit. When at last old Jolyon felt able to tackle the stairs he went up to bed. And, though still shaky next morning, the thought of the evening sustained and strengthened him. It was always such a pleasure to give her a good dinner – he suspected her of undereating when she was alone; and, at the opera to watch her eyes glow and brighten, the unconscious smiling of her lips. She hadn't much pleasure, and this was the last time he would be able to give her that treat. But when he was packing his bag he caught himself wishing that he had not the fatigue of dressing for dinner before him, and the exertion, too, of telling her about June's return.

The opera that evening was ‘Carmen’,[99] and he chose the last entr’acte to break the news, instinctively putting it off till the latest moment.

She took it quietly, queerly; in fact, he did not know how she had taken it before the wayward music lifted up again and silence became necessary. The mask was down over her face, that mask behind which so much went on that he could not see. She wanted time to think it over, no doubt! He would not press her, for she would be coming to give her lesson to-morrow afternoon, and he should see her then when she had got used to the idea. In the cab he talked only of the Carmen; he had seen better in the old days, but this one was not bad at all. When he took her hand to say good-night, she bent quickly forward and kissed his forehead.

‘Good-bye, dear Uncle Jolyon, you have been so sweet to me.’

‘To-morrow then,’ he said. ‘Good-night. Sleep well.’ She echoed softly: ‘Sleep well’ and from the cab window, already moving away, he saw her face screwed round towards him, and her hand put out in a gesture which seemed to linger.

He sought his room slowly. They never gave him the same, and he could not get used to these ‘spick-and-spandy’ bedrooms with new furniture and grey-green carpets sprinkled all over with pink roses. He was wakeful and that wretched Habanera[100] kept throbbing in his head.

His French had never been equal to its words, but its sense he knew, if it had any sense, a gipsy thing – wild and unaccountable. Well, there was in life something which upset all your care and plans – something which made men and women dance to its pipes. And he lay staring from deep-sunk eyes into the darkness where the unaccountable held sway. You thought you had hold of life, but it slipped away behind you, took you by the scruff of the neck, forced you here and forced you there, and then, likely as not, squeezed life out of you! It took the very stars like that, he shouldn’t wonder, rubbed their noses together and flung them apart; it had never done playing its pranks. Five million people in this great blunderbuss of a town, and all of them at the mercy of that Life – Force, like a lot of little dried peas hopping about on a board when you struck your fist on it. Ah, well! Himself would not hop much longer – a good long sleep would do him good!

How hot it was up here! – how noisy! His forehead burned; she had kissed it just where he always worried; just there – as if she had known the very place and wanted to kiss it all away for him. But, instead, her lips left a patch of grievous uneasiness. She had never spoken in quite that voice, had never before made that lingering gesture or looked back at him as she drove away.

He got out of bed and pulled the curtains aside; his room faced down over the river. There was little air, but the sight of that breadth of water flowing by, calm, eternal, soothed him. 'The great thing,' he thought 'is not to make myself a nuisance. I'll think of my little sweet, and go to sleep.' But it was long before the heat and throbbing of the London night died out into the short slumber of the summer morning. And old Jolyon had but forty winks.

When he reached home next day he went out to the flower garden, and with the help of Holly, who was very delicate with flowers, gathered a great bunch of carnations. They were, he told her, for 'the lady in grey' – a name still bandied between them; and he put them in a bowl in his study where he meant to tackle Irene the moment she came, on the subject of June and future lessons. Their fragrance and colour would help. After lunch he lay down, for he felt very tired, and the carriage would not bring her from the station till four o'clock. But as the hour approached he grew restless, and sought the schoolroom, which overlooked the drive. The sun-blinds were down, and Holly was there with Mademoiselle Beauce, sheltered from the heat of a stifling July day, attending to their silkworms. Old Jolyon had a natural antipathy to these methodical creatures, whose heads and colour reminded him of elephants; who nibbled such quantities of holes in nice green leaves; and smelled, as he thought, horrid. He sat down on a chintz-covered windowseat whence he could see the drive, and get what air there was; and the dog Balthasar who appreciated chintz on hot days, jumped up beside him. Over the cottage piano a violet dust-sheet, faded almost to grey, was spread, and on it the first lavender, whose scent filled the room. In spite of the coolness here, perhaps because of that coolness the beat of life vehemently impressed his ebbed – down senses. Each sunbeam which came through the chinks had annoying brilliance; that dog smelled very strong; the lavender perfume was overpowering; those silkworms heaving up their grey-green backs seemed horribly alive; and Holly's dark head bent over them had a wonderfully silky sheen. A marvellous cruelly strong thing was life when you were old and weak; it seemed to mock you with its multitude of forms and its beating vitality. He had never, till those last few weeks, had this curious feeling of being with one half of him eagerly borne along in the stream of life, and with the other half left on the bank, watching that helpless progress. Only when Irene was with him did he lose this double consciousness.

Holly turned her head, pointed with her little brown fist to the piano – for to point with a finger was not 'well-brrred' – and said slyly:

'Look at the "lady in grey," Gran; isn't she pretty to-day?'

Old Jolyon's heart gave a flutter, and for a second the room was

clouded; then it cleared, and he said with a twinkle:

'Who's been dressing her up?'

'Mam'zelle.'

'Hollee! Don't be foolish!'

That prim little Frenchwoman! She hadn't yet got over the music lessons being taken away from her. That wouldn't help. His little sweet was the only friend they had. Well, they were her lessons. And he shouldn't budge shouldn't budge for anything. He stroked the warm wool on Balthasar's head, and heard Holly say: 'When mother's home, there won't be any changes, will there? She doesn't like strangers, you know.'

The child's words seemed to bring the chilly atmosphere of opposition about old Jolyon, and disclose all the menace to his new-found freedom. Ah! He would have to resign himself to being an old man at the mercy of care and love, or fight to keep this new and prized companionship; and to fight tired him to death. But his thin, worn face hardened into resolution till it appeared all Jaw. This was his house, and his affair; he should not budge! He looked at his watch, old and thin like himself; he had owned it fifty years. Past four already! And kissing the top of Holly's head in passing, he went down to the hall. He wanted to get hold of her before she went up to give her lesson. At the first sound of wheels he stepped out into the porch, and saw at once that the victoria was empty.

'The train's in, sir; but the lady 'asn't come.'

Old Jolyon gave him a sharp upward look, his eyes seemed to push away that fat chap's curiosity, and defy him to see the bitter disappointment he was feeling.

'Very well,' he said, and turned back into the house. He went to his study and sat down, quivering like a leaf. What did this mean? She might have lost her train, but he knew well enough she hadn't. 'Good-bye, dear Uncle Jolyon.' Why 'Good-bye' and not 'Good-night'? And that hand of hers lingering in the air. And her kiss. What did it mean? Vehement alarm and irritation took possession of him. He got up and began to pace the Turkey carpet, between window and wall. She was going to give him up! He felt it for certain – and he defenceless. An old man wanting to look on beauty! It was ridiculous! Age closed his mouth, paralysed his power to fight. He had no right to what was warm and living, no right to anything but memories and sorrow. He could not plead with her; even an old man has his dignity. Defenceless! For an hour, lost to bodily fatigue, he paced up and down, past the bowl of carnations he had plucked, which mocked him with its scent. Of all things hard to bear, the prostration of will-power is hardest, for one who has always had his way. Nature had got him in its net, and like an unhappy fish he turned and swam at the meshes,

here and there, found no hole, no breaking point. They brought him tea at five o'clock, and a letter. For a moment hope beat up in him. He cut the envelope with the butter knife, and read:

> 'DEAREST UNCLE JOLYON,
>
> 'I can't bear to write anything that may disappoint you, but I was too cowardly to tell you last night. I feel I can't come down and give Holly any more lessons, now that June is coming back. Some things go too deep to be forgotten. It has been such a joy to see you and Holly. Perhaps I shall still see you sometimes when you come up, though I'm sure it's not good for you; I can see you are tiring yourself too much. I believe you ought to rest quite quietly all this hot weather, and now you have your son and June coming back you will be so happy. Thank you a million times for all your sweetness to me.
>
> *'Lovingly your, IRENE.'*

So, there it was! Not good for him to have pleasure and what he chiefly cared about; to try and put off feeling the inevitable end of all things, the approach of death with its stealthy, rustling footsteps. Not good for him! Not even she could see how she was his new lease of interest in life, the incarnation of all the beauty he felt slipping from him.

His tea grew cold, his cigar remained unlit; and up and down he paced, torn between his dignity and his hold on life. Intolerable to be squeezed out slowly, without a say of your own, to live on when your will was in the hands of others bent on weighing you to the ground with care and love. Intolerable! He would see what telling her the truth would do – the truth that he wanted the sight of her more than just a lingering on. He sat down at his old bureau and took a pen. But he could not write. There was something revolting in having to plead like this; plead that she should warm his eyes with her beauty. It was tantamount to confessing dotage. He simply could not. And instead, he wrote:

> 'I had hoped that the memory of old sores would not be allowed to stand in the way of what is a pleasure and a profit to me and my little grand-daughter. But old men learn to forego their whims; they are obliged to, even the whim to live must be foregone sooner or later; and perhaps the sooner the better.
>
> *'My love to you,*

'Bitter,' he thought, 'but I can't help it. I'm tired.' He sealed and dropped it into the box for the evening post, and hearing it fall to the bottom, thought: 'There goes all I've looked forward to!'

That evening after dinner which he scarcely touched, after his cigar which he left half-smoked for it made him feel faint, he went very slowly upstairs and stole into the night nursery. He sat down on the window-seat. A night – light was burning, and he could just see Holly's face, with one hand underneath the cheek. An early cockchafer buzzed in the Japanese paper with which they had filled the grate, and one of the horses in the stable stamped restlessly. To sleep like that child! He pressed apart two rungs of the venetian blind and looked out. The moon was rising, blood-red. He had never seen so red a moon. The woods and fields out there were dropping to sleep too, in the last glimmer of the summer light. And beauty, like a spirit, walked. 'I've had a long life,' he thought, 'the best of nearly everything. I'm an ungrateful chap; I've seen a lot of beauty in my time. Poor young Bosinney said I had a sense of beauty. There's a man in the moon to-night!' A moth went by, another, another. 'Ladies in grey!' He closed his eyes. A feeling that he would never open them again beset him; he let it grow, let himself sink; then, with a shiver, dragged the lids up. There was something wrong with him, no doubt, deeply wrong; he would have to have the doctor after all. It didn't much matter now! Into that coppice the moon-light would have crept; there would be shadows, and those shadows would be the only things awake. No birds, beasts, flowers, insects; just the shadows moving; 'Ladies in grey!' Over that log they would climb; would whisper together. She and Bosinney! Funny thought! And the frogs and little things would whisper too! How the clock ticked, in here! It was all eerie – out there in the light of that red moon; in here with the little steady night-light and, the ticking clock and the nurse's dressing – gown hanging from the edge of the screen, tall, like a woman's figure. 'Lady in grey!' And a very odd thought beset him: Did she exist? Had she ever come at all? Or was she but the emanation of all the beauty he had loved and must leave so soon? The violet-grey spirit with the dark eyes and the crown of amber hair, who walks the dawn and the moonlight, and at bluebell time? What was she, who was she, did she exist? He rose and stood a moment clutching the window-sill, to give him a sense of reality again; then began tiptoeing towards the door. He stopped at the foot of the bed; and Holly, as if conscious of his eyes fixed on her, stirred, sighed, and curled up closer in defence. He tiptoed on and passed out into the dark passage; reached his room, undressed at once, and stood before a mirror in his night-shirt. What a

scarecrow – with temples fallen in, and thin legs! His eyes resisted his own image, and a look of pride came on his face. All was in league to pull him down, even his reflection in the glass, but he was not down – yet! He got into bed, and lay a long time without sleeping, trying to reach resignation, only too well aware that fretting and disappointment were very bad for him.

He woke in the morning so unrefreshed and strengthless that he sent for the doctor. After sounding him, the fellow pulled a face as long as your arm, and ordered him to stay in bed and give up smoking. That was no hardship; there was nothing to get up for, and when he felt ill, tobacco always lost its savour. He spent the morning languidly with the sun-blinds down, turning and re-turning The Times, not reading much, the dog Balthasar lying beside his bed. With his lunch they brought him a telegram, running thus:

'Your letter received coming down this afternoon will be with you at four-thirty. Irene.'

Coming down! After all! Then she did exist – and he was not deserted. Coming down! A glow ran through his limbs; his cheeks and forehead felt hot. He drank his soup, and pushed the tray-table away, lying very quiet until they had removed lunch and left him alone; but every now and then his eyes twinkled. Coming down! His heart beat fast, and then did not seem to beat at all. At three o'clock he got up and dressed deliberately, noiselessly. Holly and Mam'zelle would be in the schoolroom, and the servants asleep after their dinner, he shouldn't wonder. He opened his door cautiously, and went downstairs. In the hall the dog Balthasar lay solitary, and, followed by him, old Jolyon passed into his study and out into the burning afternoon. He meant to go down and meet her in the coppice, but felt at once he could not manage that in this heat. He sat down instead under the oak tree by the swing, and the dog Balthasar, who also felt the heat, lay down beside him. He sat there smiling. What a revel of bright minutes! What a hum of insects, and cooing of pigeons! It was the quintessence of a summer day. Lovely! And he was happy – happy as a sand-boy, what – ever that might be. She was coming; she had not given him up! He had everything in life he wanted – except a little more breath, and less weight – just here! He would see her when she emerged from the fernery, come swaying just a little, a violet-grey figure passing over the daisies and dandelions and 'soldiers' on the lawn – the soldiers with their flowery crowns. He would not move, but she would come up to him and say: 'Dear Uncle Jolyon, I am sorry!' and sit in the swing and let him look at her and tell her that he had not been very well but was all right now; and that dog would lick her hand. That dog knew his master was fond of her; that dog was a good dog.

It was quite shady under the tree; the sun could not get at him, only make the rest of the world bright so that he could see the Grand Stand at Epsom away out there, very far, and the cows cropping the clover in the field and swishing at the flies with their tails. He smelled the scent of limes, and lavender. Ah! that was why there was such a racket of bees. They were excited – busy, as his heart was busy and excited. Drowsy, too, drowsy and drugged on honey and happiness; as his heart was drugged and drowsy. Summer – summer – they seemed saying; great bees and little bees, and the flies too!

The stable clock struck four; in half an hour she would be here. He would have just one tiny nap, because he had had so little sleep of late; and then he would be fresh for her, fresh for youth and beauty, coming towards him across the sunlit lawn – lady in grey! And settling back in his chair he closed his eyes. Some thistle down came on what little air there was, and pitched on his moustache more white than itself. He did not know; but his breathing stirred it, caught there. A ray of sunlight struck through and lodged on his boot. A bumble-bee alighted and strolled on the crown of his Panama hat. And the delicious surge of slumber reached the brain beneath that hat, and the head swayed forward and rested on his breast. Summer – summer! So went the hum.

The stable clock struck the quarter past. The dog Balthasar stretched and looked up at his master. The thistledown no longer moved. The dog placed his chin over the sunlit foot. It did not stir. The dog withdrew his chin quickly, rose, and leaped on old Jolyon's lap, looked in his face, whined; then, leaping down, sat on his haunches, gazing up. And suddenly he uttered a long, long howl.

But the thistledown was still as death, and the face of his old master.

Summer – summer – summer! The soundless footsteps on the grass!

Washington Irving
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
Found among the papers of the Late Diedrich Knickerbocker

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.

– Castle of Indolence

In the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson,[101] at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee,[102] and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of St. Nicholas[103] when they crossed, there lies a small market town or rural port, which by some is called Greensburgh,[104] but which is more generally and properly known by the name of Tarry Town.[105] This name was given, we are told, in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley or rather lap of land among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose; and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

I recollect that, when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut-trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noontime, when all nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the Sabbath[106] stillness around and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat

whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.

From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen[107] has long been known by the name of *Sleepy Hollow*,[108] and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows[109] there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson.[110] Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback, without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper,[111] whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the visionary propensity I have mentioned is

not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud, for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that population, manners, and customs remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, *'tarried,'* in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut,[112] a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs; the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copybooks. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a withe twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out, an idea most probably borrowed by the architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eelpot. The schoolhouse stood in a rather

lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch-tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, in the tone of menace or command, or, peradventure, by the appalling sound of the birch, as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, *'Spare the rod and spoil the child.'* Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burden off the backs of the weak, and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some little tough wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called *'doing his duty by their parents;'* and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that *'he would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live.'*

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burden, and schoolmasters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from

pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody.[113] It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers; where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation; and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the millpond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated *'by hook and by crook,*[114]*'* the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood; being considered a kind of idle, gentlemanlike personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea-table of a farmhouse, and the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver teapot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays; gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering, with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent millpond; while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master

of Cotton Mather's[115] *History of New England Witchcraft*, in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his schoolhouse, and there con over old Mather's direful tales, until the gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination, the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree toad, that harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes and the good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, *in linked sweetness long drawn out,* floating from the distant hill, or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and of the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them woefully with speculations upon comets and shooting stars; and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round, and that they were half the time topsy-turvy!

But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to

show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which, like a sheeted spectre, beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet; and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! And how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings!

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind that walk in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once beset by Satan in divers shapes, in his lonely perambulations, yet daylight put an end to all these evils; and he would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the Devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam;[116] the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those everything was snug, happy and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it; and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so

fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water, in a little well formed of a barrel; and then stole sparkling away through the grass, to a neighboring brook, that babbled along among alders and dwarf willows. Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, from whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard, and Guinea fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart, sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly, and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon, and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savory sausages; and even bright chanticleer himself lay sprawling on his back, in a side dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burdened with ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be

readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky,[117] Tennessee,[118] or the Lord knows where!

When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of those spacious farmhouses, with high-ridged but lowly sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers; the low projecting eaves forming a piazza[119] along the front, capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness, various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighboring river. Benches were built along the sides for summer use; and a great spinning-wheel at one end, and a churn at the other, showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From this piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion, and the place of usual residence. Here rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool, ready to be spun; in another, a quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn, and strings of dried apples and peaches, hung in gay festoons along the walls, mingled with the gaud of red peppers; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors; andirons, with their accompanying shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock-oranges and conch-shells decorated the mantelpiece; strings of various-colored birds eggs were suspended above it; a great ostrich egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard, knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had more real difficulties than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything but giants, enchanters, fiery dragons, and such like easily conquered adversaries, to contend with and had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass, and walls of adamant to the castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all which he achieved as easily as a man would carve his way to the centre of a Christmas pie; and then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset

with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments; and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers, who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor.

Among these, the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roystering blade, of the name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean[120] frame and great powers of limb he had received the nickname of *Brom Bones*, by which he was universally known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cock fights; and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes, setting his hat on one side, and giving his decisions with an air and tone that admitted of no gainsay or appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic; but had more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness, there was a strong dash of waggish good humor at bottom. He had three or four boon companions, who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles round. In cold weather he was distinguished by a fur cap, surmounted with a flaunting fox's tail; and when the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farmhouses at midnight, with whoop and halloo, like a troop of Don Cossacks; and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, *'Ay, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!'* The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will; and, when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity, always shook their heads, and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

This rantipole hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries, and though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire, who felt no inclination to cross a

lion in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's paling, on a Sunday night, a sure sign that his master was courting, or, as it is termed, *'sparking,'* within, all other suitors passed by in despair, and carried the war into other quarters.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and, considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple-jack, yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away – jerk! – he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness; for he was not a man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing-master, he made frequent visits at the farmhouse; not that he had anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling-block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy indulgent soul; he loved his daughter better even than his pipe, and, like a reasonable man and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His notable little wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry; for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus, while the busy dame bustled about the house, or plied her spinning-wheel at one end of the piazza, honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a little wooden warrior, who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the mean time, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point, or door of access; while others have a thousand avenues, and may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a still greater proof of generalship to maintain possession of the latter, for man must battle for his fortress at every door and window. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown; but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances,

the interests of the former evidently declined: his horse was no longer seen tied to the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have carried matters to open warfare and have settled their pretensions to the lady, according to the mode of those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore, – by single combat; but Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against him; he had overheard a boast of Bones, that he would *'double the schoolmaster up, and lay him on a shelf of his own schoolhouse;'* and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition, and to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the schoolhouse at night, in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody.

In this way matters went on for some time, without producing any material effect on the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails behind the throne, a constant terror to evil doers, while on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited weapons, detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs, fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper gamecocks. Apparently there had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the schoolroom. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury,[121] and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt,[122] which he managed with a rope by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school door

with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making or *'quilting frolic,'* to be held that evening at Mynheer[123] Van Tassel's; and having delivered his message with that air of importance, and effort at fine language, which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear, to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves, inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed only suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the schoolhouse. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plow-horse, that had outlived almost everything but its viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck, and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favorite steed of his master's, the choleric Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called, and the skirts of his black

coat fluttered out almost to the horses tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight.

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day; the sky was clear and serene, and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of beech and hickory-nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighboring stubble field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry, they fluttered, chirping and frolicking from bush to bush, and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock robin, the favorite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the cedar bird, with its red-tipt wings and yellow-tipt tail and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light blue coat and white underclothes, screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast store of apples; some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees; some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market; others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty-pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields breathing the odor of the beehive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and *'sugared suppositions,'* he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down in the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that

here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into the deep blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark gray and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast; and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk, withered little dames, in close-crimped caps, long-waisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pincushions, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square-skirted coats, with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair.

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit.

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table, in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! There was the doughty doughnut, the tender oly koek,[124] and the crisp and crumbling cruller;[125] sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies, and peach pies, and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and

roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst – Heaven bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old schoolhouse; snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper, and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good humor, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to *'fall to, and help themselves.'*

And now the sound of the music from the common room, or hall, summoned to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought St. Vitus[126] himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eyeballs, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings; while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with Old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding and infested with refugees, cowboys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and, in the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate[127] with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of White Plains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade, and glance off at the hilt; in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighborhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long-settled retreats; but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities.

The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree

where the unfortunate Major André was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the Headless Horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the churchyard.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust-trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent, whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water, bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. Such was one of the favorite haunts of the Headless Horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical[128] disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the Horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge; when the Horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the Galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that on returning one night from the neighboring village of Sing Sing, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin[129] horse all hollow, but just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his

invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native State of Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on pillions[130] behind their favorite swains, and their light-hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter, until they gradually died away, – and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a *tête-à-tête*[131] with the heiress; fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chapfallen. Oh, these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a henroost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth, on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop, riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watchdog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farmhouse away among the hills – but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bullfrog from a neighboring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the

afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major André's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights, and doleful lamentations, told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle was answered; it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white, hanging in the midst of the tree: he paused and ceased whistling but, on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan – his teeth chattered, and his knees smote against the saddle: it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another, as they were swayed about by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape-vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a lateral movement, and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and

kicked lustily with the contrary foot: it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge, with a suddenness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, *'Who are you?'* He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm[132] tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind, the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless! but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on

the pommel of his saddle! His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong downhill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story; and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in the chase, but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel, and endeavored to hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's wrath passed across his mind, – for it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches; and (unskilful rider that he was!) he had much ado to maintain his seat; sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's backbone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared. *'If I can but reach that bridge,'* thought Ichabod, *'I am safe.'* Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash, he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the

black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse, and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod, and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses' hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half; two stocks for the neck; a pair or two of worsted stockings; an old pair of corduroy[133] small-clothes; a rusty razor; a book of psalm tunes full of dog's-ears; and a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's *History of Witchcraft,* a *New England Almanac,* and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper; who, from that time forward, determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before, he must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the Galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him; the school was removed to a different quarter of the hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar; turned politician; electioneered; written for the newspapers; and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones, too, who, shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe; and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue and the plowboy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

Oscar Wilde
The Canterville Ghost

I

When Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

'We have not cared to live in the place ourselves,' said Lord Canterville, 'since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev.Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College,[134] Cambridge.[135] After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library.'

'My Lord,' answered the Minister, 'I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show.'

'I fear that the ghost exists,' said Lord Canterville, smiling, 'though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family.'

'Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy.'

'You are certainly very natural in America,' answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, 'and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you.'

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappen, of West 53rd Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile.

Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport[136] Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles[137] statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire,[138] who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton[139] that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called *The Stars and Stripes*,[140] as they were always getting swished.

They were delightful boys, and with the exception of the worthy Minister the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot,[141] the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a waggonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits. It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech-trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each a low curtsey as they alighted, and said in a quaint,

old-fashioned manner, ‘I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase.’ Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall[142] into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained-glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, ‘I am afraid something has been spilt there.’

‘Yes, madam,’ replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, ‘blood has been spilt on that spot.’

‘How horrid,’ cried Mrs. Otis; ‘I don’t at all care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once.’

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, ‘It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed.’

‘That is all nonsense,’ cried Washington Otis; ‘Pinkerton’s Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time,’ and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

‘I knew Pinkerton would do it,’ he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the sombre room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

‘What a monstrous climate!’ said the American Minister calmly, as he lit a long cheroot.[143] ‘I guess the old country is so over-populated that they have not enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of opinion that emigration is the only thing for England.’

‘My dear Hiram,’ cried Mrs. Otis, ‘what can we do with a woman who faints?’

‘Charge it to her like breakages,’ answered the Minister; ‘she won’t faint after that;’ and in a few moments Mrs. Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr. Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

‘I have seen things with my own eyes, sir,’ she said, ‘that would

make any Christian's hair stand on end, and many and many a night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here.' Mr. Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of Providence on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.

II

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. ‘I don’t think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent,’ said Washington, ‘for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost.’ He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself, and the key carried upstairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial of the existence of ghosts, Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Myers and Podmore on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime. That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasmata were removed for ever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till nine o’clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of receptive expectation which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. The subjects discussed, as I have since learned from Mr. Otis, were merely such as form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class, such as the immense superiority of Miss Fanny Davenport[144] over Sara Bernhardt[145] as an actress; the difficulty of obtaining green corn, buckwheat cakes, and hominy, even in the best English houses; the importance of Boston in the development of the world-soul; the advantages of the baggage check system in railway travelling; and the sweetness of the New York accent as compared to the London drawl. No mention at all was made of the supernatural, nor was Sir Simon de Canterville alluded to in any way. At eleven o’clock the family retired, and by half-past all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor, outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o’clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight,

an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves.

'My dear sir,' said Mr. Otis, 'I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it.' With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space[146] as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realise his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted. He thought of the Dowager Duchess, whom he had frightened into a fit as she stood before the glass in her lace and diamonds; of the four housemaids, who had gone off into hysterics when he merely grinned at them through the curtains of one of the spare bedrooms; of the rector of the parish, whose candle he had blown out as he was coming late one night from the library, and who had been under the care of Sir William Gull ever since, a perfect martyr to nervous disorders; and of old Madame de Tremouillac, who, having wakened up one morning early and seen a skeleton seated in an armchair by the fire reading her diary, had been confined to her bed for six weeks with an attack of brain fever, and, on her recovery, had become reconciled to the Church, and broken off her connection with that notorious sceptic Monsieur de Voltaire.[147] He remembered the terrible night when the wicked Lord Canterville was found choking in his dressing-room, with the knave of diamonds half-way down his throat, and confessed, just before he died, that he had cheated Charles James Fox[148] out of £50,000 at Crockford's by means of that very card, and swore that the ghost had made him swallow it. All his great achievements came back

to him again, from the butler who had shot himself in the pantry because he had seen a green hand tapping at the window pane, to the beautiful Lady Stutfield, who was always obliged to wear a black velvet band round her throat to hide the mark of five fingers burnt upon her white skin, and who drowned herself at last in the carp pond at the end of the King's Walk. With the enthusiastic egotism of the true artist he went over his most celebrated performances, and smiled bitterly to himself as he recalled to mind his last appearance as *Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe,* his *début* as *Gaunt Gibeon, the Blood-sucker of Bexley Moor,* and the *furore* he had excited one lovely June evening by merely playing ninepins with his own bones upon the lawn-tennis ground. And after all this, some wretched modern Americans were to come and offer him the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at his head! It was quite unbearable. Besides, no ghost in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly, he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep thought.

III

The next morning, when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted. ‘I have no wish,’ he said, ‘to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don’t think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him’ – a very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. ‘Upon the other hand,’ he continued, ‘if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep, with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms.’

For the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis, and the windows kept closely barred. The chameleon-like colour, also, of the stain excited a good deal of comment.

Some mornings it was a dull (almost Indian) red, then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once when they came down for family prayers, according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopalian Church,[149] they found it a bright emerald-green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearful crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a large suit of old armour had become detached from its stand, and had fallen on the stone floor, while, seated in a high-backed chair, was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their pea-shooters with them, at once discharged two pellets on him, with that accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him with his revolver, and called upon him, in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands! The ghost started up with a wild shriek of rage, and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis’s candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the

top of the staircase he recovered himself, and determined to give his celebrated peal of demoniac laughter. This he had on more than one occasion found extremely useful. It was said to have turned Lord Raker's wig grey in a single night, and had certainly made three of Lady Canterville's French governesses give warning before their month was up. He accordingly laughed his most horrible laugh, till the old vaulted roof rang and rang again, but hardly had the fearful echo died away when a door opened, and Mrs. Otis came out in a light blue dressing-gown. 'I am afraid you are far from well,' she said, 'and have brought you a bottle of Dr. Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy.' The ghost glared at her in fury, and began at once to make preparations for turning himself into a large black dog, an accomplishment for which he was justly renowned, and to which the family doctor always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Hon. Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.

On reaching his room he entirely broke down, and became a prey to the most violent agitation. The vulgarity of the twins, and the gross materialism of Mrs. Otis, were naturally extremely annoying, but what really distressed him most was, that he had been unable to wear the suit of mail. He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a Spectre In Armour, if for no more sensible reason, at least out of respect for their national poet Longfellow over whose graceful and attractive poetry he himself had whiled away many a weary hour when the Cantervilles were up in town. Besides, it was his own suit. He had worn it with great success at the Kenilworth tournament, and had been highly complimented on it by no less a person than the Virgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breastplate and steel casque, and had fallen heavily on the stone pavement, barking both his knees severely, and bruising the knuckles of his right hand.

For some days after this he was extremely ill, and hardly stirred out of his room at all, except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself, he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, the 17th of August, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favour of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled at the wrists and neck, and a rusty dagger. Towards evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so

high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact, it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this. He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of low music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain, by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the reckless and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient, or, if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralysed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl round the room, with white, bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of *Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton,* a *rôle* in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of *Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery*.

At half-past ten he heard the family going to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, who, with the light-hearted gaiety of schoolboys, were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest, but at a quarter past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he sallied forth. The owl beat against the window panes, the raven croaked from the old yew-tree, and the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept unconscious of their doom, and high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady snoring of the Minister for the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange sixteenth-century curses, and ever

and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air. Finally he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long grey locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so, than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back, and hid his blanched face in his long, bony hands. Right in front of him was standing a horrible spectre, motionless as a carven image, and monstrous as a madman's dream! Its head was bald and burnished; its face round, and fat, and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan[150] form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters, some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins, some awful calendar of crime, and, with its right hand, it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and, after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning by the butler. Once in the privacy of his own apartment, he flung himself down on a small pallet-bed, and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave old Canterville spirit asserted itself, and he determined to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with silver, he returned towards the spot where he had first laid eyes on the grisly phantom, feeling that, after all, two ghosts were better than one, and that, by the aid of his new friend, he might safely grapple with the twins. On reaching the spot, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. Something had evidently happened to the spectre, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming falchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wall in a strained and uncomfortable attitude. He rushed forward and seized it in his arms, when, to his horror, the head slipped off and rolled on the floor, the body assumed a recumbent posture, and he found himself clasping a white dimity bed-curtain, with a sweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet! Unable to understand this curious transformation, he clutched the placard with feverish haste, and there, in the grey morning light, he read these fearful words: —

YE OTIS GHOSTE.
Ye Onlie True and Originale Spook.
Beware of Ye Imitationes.
All others are Counterfeite.

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground his toothless gums together; and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore, according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that when Chanticleer[151] had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and Murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain oath and baffled purpose. There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion on which this oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. ‘Perdition seize the naughty fowl,’ he muttered, ‘I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the gorge, and made him crow for me an ’twere in death!’ He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.

IV

The next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural.

For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old worm-eaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains. I am bound to acknowledge that it was with a good deal of difficulty that he brought himself to adopt this last mode of protection. However, one night, while the family was at dinner, he slipped into Mr. Otis's bedroom and carried off the bottle. He felt a little humiliated at first, but afterwards was sensible enough to see that there was a great deal to be said for the invention, and, to a certain degree, it served his purpose. Still, in spite of everything, he was not left unmolested. Strings were continually being stretched across the corridor, over which he tripped in the dark, and on one occasion, while dressed for the part of *Black Isaac, or the Huntsman of Hogley Woods,* he met with a severe fall, through treading on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed from the entrance of the Tapestry Chamber to the top of the oak staircase. This last insult so enraged him, that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity and social position, and determined to visit the insolent young Etonians the next night in his celebrated character of *Reckless Rupert, or the Headless Earl.*

He had not appeared in this disguise for more than seventy years: in fact, not since he had so frightened pretty Lady Barbara Modish by means of it, that she suddenly broke off her engagement with the

present Lord Canterville's grandfather, and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castletown, declaring that nothing in the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however, an extremely difficult make-up, if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-natural world, and it took him fully three hours to make his preparations. At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebuse,[152] in case he should be attacked by the twins. The final blow he received occurred on the 19th of September. He had gone downstairs to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested, and was amusing himself by making satirical remarks on the large Saroni photographs of the United States Minister and his wife, which had now taken the place of the Canterville family pictures. He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with churchyard mould, had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of *Jonas the Graveless, or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn,* one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervilles had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with

their neighbour, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring. As he was strolling towards the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood-stain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads, and shrieked out 'BOO!' in his ear.

Seized with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe; and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for him on several occasions, and strewed the passages with nutshells every night to the great annoyance of their parents and the servants, but it was of no avail. It was quite evident that his feelings were so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Otis consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic Party, on which he had been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organised a wonderful clam-bake, which amazed the whole county; the boys took to lacrosse, euchre, poker, and other American national games; and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Canterville Chase. It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his best congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

The Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville ghost, and was found the next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state, that though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say anything again but *Double Sixes.* The story was well known at the time, though, of course, out of respect to the feelings of the two noble families, every attempt was made to hush it up; and a full account of all the circumstances connected with it will be found in the third volume of Lord Tattle's *Recollections of the Prince Regent and his Friends.* The ghost, then, was naturally very anxious to show that he had not lost his influence over the Stiltons, with whom, indeed, he

was distantly connected, his own first cousin having been married *en secondes noces* to the Sieur de Bulkeley, from whom, as every one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire are lineally descended. Accordingly, he made arrangements for appearing to Virginia's little lover in his celebrated impersonation of *The Vampire Monk, or, the Bloodless Benedictine*,[153] a performance so horrible that when old Lady Startup saw it, which she did on one fatal New Year's Eve, in the year 1764, she went off into the most piercing shrieks, which culminated in violent apoplexy, and died in three days, after disinheriting the Cantervilles, who were her nearest relations, and leaving all her money to her London apothecary. At the last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal Bedchamber, and dreamed of Virginia.

V

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge, that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

'I am so sorry for you,' she said, 'but my brothers are going back to Eton tomorrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you.'

'It is absurd asking me to behave myself,' he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, 'quite absurd. I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing.'

'It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife.'

'Well, I quite admit it,' said the Ghost petulantly, 'but it was a purely family matter, and concerned no one else.'

'It is very wrong to kill any one,' said Virginia, who at times had a sweet Puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor.

'Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent up to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her.'

'Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?'

'No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of

you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family.'

'Stop!' cried Virginia stamping her foot, 'it is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't do any more sunsets then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?'

'Well, really,' said the Ghost, rather meekly, 'what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Detergent, I certainly saw no reason why I should not have your paints. As for colour, that is always a matter of taste: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instance, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind.'

'You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage, and though there is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost.'

'I don't think I should like America.'

'I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities,' said Virginia satirically.

'No ruins! no curiosities!' answered the Ghost; 'you have your navy and your manners.'

'Good evening; I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday.'

'Please don't go, Miss Virginia,' he cried; 'I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot.'

'That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not very clever.'

'I have not slept for three hundred years,' he said sadly, and Virginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder; 'for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired.'

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little lips trembled like rose-leaves. She came towards him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

'Poor, poor Ghost,' she murmured; 'have you no place where you can sleep?'

'Far away beyond the pinewoods,' he answered, in a low dreamy voice, 'there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold, crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers.'

Virginia's eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

'You mean the Garden of Death,' she whispered.

'Yes, Death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of Death's house, for Love is always with you, and Love is stronger than Death is.'

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she was in a terrible dream.

Then the Ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

'Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?'

'Oh, often,' cried the little girl, looking up; 'I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and it is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

'When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.

'But I don't know what they mean.'

'They mean,' he said sadly, 'that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail.'

Virginia made no answer, and the Ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. ‘I am not afraid,’ she said firmly, ‘and I will ask the Angel to have mercy on you.’

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, as he led her across the dusky room. On the faded green tapestry were broidered little huntsmen. They blew their tasselled horns and with their tiny hands waved to her to go back. ‘Go back! little Virginia,’ they cried, ‘go back!’ but the Ghost clutched her hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard tails, and goggle eyes, blinked at her from the carven chimney-piece, and murmured ‘Beware! little Virginia, beware! we may never see you again,’ but the Ghost glided on more swiftly, and Virginia did not listen. When they reached the end of the room he stopped, and muttered some words she could not understand. She opened her eyes, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a mist, and a great black cavern in front of her. A bitter cold wind swept round them, and she felt something pulling at her dress. ‘Quick, quick,’ cried the Ghost, ‘or it will be too late,’ and, in a moment, the wainscoting had closed behind them, and the Tapestry Chamber was empty.

VI

About ten minutes later, the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck, and Virginia did not appear, she became really agitated, and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half-past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere. They were all now in the greatest state of excitement, and did not know what to do when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gypsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants.

The little Duke of Cheshire, who was perfectly frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow him, as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. On arriving at the spot, however, he found that the gypsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass. Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and despatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the country, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gypsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and, after insisting on his wife and the three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles, when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed and no hat. 'I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis,' gasped out the boy, 'but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please, don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!'

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young scapegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia, so leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said, 'Well, Cecil, if you won't go back I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot.'

'Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!' cried the little Duke, laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station.

There Mr. Otis inquired of the station-master if any one answering to the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station-master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept for her, and, after having bought a hat for the little Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting up his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Bexley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a well-known haunt of the gypsies, as there was a large common next to it. Here they roused up the rural policeman, but could get no information from him, and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heart-broken. They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gatehouse with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gypsies had been caught on Brockley meadows, but she was not with them, and they had explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they might be late. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had stayed behind to help in the search. The carp-pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Virginia was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony. In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau-de-cologne by the old housekeeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they had finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately. Just as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful peal of thunder shook the house, a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, and out on the landing, looking very pale and white, with a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. In a moment they had all

rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

'Good heavens! Child, where have you been?' said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. 'Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more.'

'Except on the Ghost! Except on the Ghost!' shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

'My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again,' murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child, and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

'Papa,' said Virginia quietly, 'I have been with the Ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died.'

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained to it was a gaunt skeleton, that was stretched out at full length on the stone floor, and seemed to be trying to grasp with its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned trencher and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was covered inside with green mould. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of dust. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, and, folding her little hands together, began to pray silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was now disclosed to them.

'Hallo!' suddenly exclaimed one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try and discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. 'Hallo! The old withered almond-tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite plainly in the moonlight.'

'God has forgiven him,' said Virginia gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

'What an angel you are!' cried the young Duke, and he put his arm round her neck, and kissed her.

VII

Four days after these curious incidents a funeral started from Canterville Chase at about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich-plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up especially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him. A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard, just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Rev. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia stepped forward, and laid on it a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver the little churchyard, and from a distant copse a nightingale began to sing. She thought of the ghost's description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke a word during the drive home.

The next morning, before Lord Canterville went up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly magnificent, especially a certain ruby necklace with old Venetian setting, which was really a superb specimen of sixteenth-century work, and their value was so great that Mr. Otis felt considerable scruples about allowing his daughter to accept them.

'My lord,' he said, 'I know that in this country mortmain is held to apply to trinkets as well as to land, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms in your family. I must beg you. Accordingly, to take them to London with you, and to regard them simply as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain strange conditions. As for my daughter, she is merely a child, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but little interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. I am also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say, is no mean authority upon Art – having had the

privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl – that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a tall price. Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognise how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain gauds and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe Immortal, principles of Republican simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box, as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and consequently a good deal out of repair, you may perhaps think fit to comply with her request. For my own part, I confess I am a good deal surprised to find a child of mine expressing sympathy with medievalism in any form, and can only account for it by the fact that Virginia was born in one of your London suburbs shortly after Mrs. Otis had returned from a trip to Athens.'

Lord Canterville listened very gravely to the worthy Minister's speech, pulling his grey moustache now and then to hide an involuntary smile, and when Mr. Otis had eked, he shook him cordially by the hand, and said, 'My dear sir, your charming little daughter rendered my unlucky ancestor, Sir Simon, a very important service, and I and my family are much indebted to her for her marvellous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers, and, egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life. As for their being heirlooms, nothing is an heirloom that is not so mentioned in a will or legal document, and the existence of these jewels has been quite unknown. I assure you I have no more claim on them than your butler, and when Miss Virginia grows up I daresay she will be pleased to have pretty things to wear. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and anything that belonged to the ghost passed at once into your possession, as, whatever activity Sir Simon may have shown in the corridor at night, in point of law he was really dead, and you acquired his property by purchase.'

Mr. Otis was a good deal distressed at Lord Canterville's refusal, and begged him to reconsider his decision, but the good-natured peer was quite firm, and finally induced the Minister to allow his daughter to retain the present the ghost had given her, and when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet,

which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose, and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself. Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, 'was not without apprehension lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of Republican simplicity should be forgotten.' His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Canterville Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pine-wood. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window. The Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by it for some time they strolled into the ruined chancel of the old abbey. There the Duchess sat down on a fallen pillar, while her husband lay at her feet smoking a cigarette and looking up at her beautiful eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette away, took hold of her hand, and said to her, 'Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband.'

'Dear Cecil! I have no secrets from you.'

'Yes, you have,' he answered, smiling, 'you have never told me what happened to you when you were locked up with the ghost.'

'I have never told any one, Cecil,' said Virginia gravely.

'I know that, but you might tell me.'

'Please don't ask me, Cecil, I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe him a great deal. Yes, don't laugh, Cecil, I really do. He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.'

The Duke rose and kissed his wife lovingly.

'You can have your secret as long as I have your heart,' he murmured.

'You have always had that, Cecil.'

'And you will tell our children some day, won't you?'

Virginia blushed.

English-Russian Vocabulary

a adjective прилагательное
adv adverb наречие
cj conjunction союз
n noun существительное
num numeral числительное
past past tense прошедшее время
pl. plural множественное число
pron pronoun местоимение
p. p. past participle причастие прошедшего времени
prep preposition предлог
pr.p. present participle причастие настоящего времени
v verb глагол

A

abandon – *v* покидать, бросать
abject – *a* подлый, низкий
abolish – *v* отменять
abominable – *a* омерзительный
abstemious – *a* умеренный
ache – *v* болеть
adjacent – *a* расположенный рядом
adroit – *a* ловкий, проворный
adversary – *n* противник
affrighted – *a* испуганный
aisle – *n* проход; придел
alder – *n* ольха
alleviate – *v* облегчать
allusion – *n* упоминание
amber – *n* янтарь
amour – *n* роман, любовь
ancestor – *n* предок
anchor – *n* якорь
ankle – *n* лодыжка
annihilate – *v* уничтожать
anticipation – *n* ожидание, предчувствие
antithetical – *a* несовместимый
apparition – *n* явление
appurtenance – *n* принадлежность
arbiter – *n* третейский судья
arrant – *a* сущий
arrogant – *a* высокомерный
ascend – *v* подниматься
aspiration – *n* стремление
assertion – *n* утверждение
astounding – *a* поразительный
asunder – *adv* в разные стороны
aversion – *n* отвращение
awe – *n* благоговение
azure – *a* небесно-голубой

B

bargain – *n* сделка
beg – *v* умолять
beget **(begot, begotten)** – *v* порождать, вызывать
belly – *n* живот
beset **(beset, beset)** – *v* осаждать
bestow – *v* даровать
beverage – *n* напиток
bosom – *n* грудь, пазуха
boulder – *n* валун
boundary – *n* граница
bramble – *n* ежевика
brass – *n* латунь
breakage – *n* бой (посуды); отбой (породы); повреждение
bribe – *n* подкуп
brimstone – *n* сера
broider – *n* вышивка
broom – *n* метла
bruise – *n* синяк, ушиб
buggy – *n* вагонетка, тележка

C

capacious – *a* вместительный; просторный
cape – *n* мыс; накидка
carnation – *n* гвоздика
casket – *n* шкатулка
casque – *n* шлем, каска
cavern – *n* пещера
cease – *v* прекращать
celestial – *a* небесный
chancel – *n* алтарь
charnel **(house)** – *n* склеп
chaste – *a* целомудренный, непорочный
cinder – *n* зола; шлак
circumference – *n* окружение; окружность
clamor – *n* шум, грохот
cliff – *n* отвесная скала
cloister – *n* монастырь
coat-of-arms *n* герб
cognomen – *n* прозвище
coiffure – *n* прическа
combat – *n* сражение, бой
common – *a* обыкновенный; всеобщий
composure – *n* хладнокровие
condemnation – *n* осуждение
confectionery – *n* кондитерские изделия; кондитерская фабрика
confine – *v* ограничивать
conjure – *v* заклинать, вызывать
constellation – *n* созвездие
conviction – *n* убеждение
coppice – *n* рощица
cordial – *n амер.* ликер
corpse – *n* труп
counterfeit – *n* фальшивка, подделка
cove – *n* бухточка
cranium – *n* череп
crest – *n* гребешок, хохолок
crestfallen – *a* упавший духом
cuckoo – *n* кукушка

D

damsel – *n* девица (*уст.*)
decency – *n* приличие, благопристойность
deferentially – *adv* почтительно
defiant – *a* вызывающий
delicious – *a* восхитительный
dell – *n* лощина, долина
descendant – *n* потомок, отпрыск
deserted – *a* заброшенный
desolation – *n* разорение, опустошение
desperation – *n* отчаяние
destination – *n* (пред)назначение
disclosure – *n* разоблачение; обнаружение
disconsolate – *a* безутешный
discontented – *a* недовольный
disembark – *v* сходить на берег; выгружать
disgrace – *n* унижение, позор
disinherit – *v* лишать наследства
dismay – *n* беспокойство, испуг
distraction – *n* отвлечение внимания; беспорядок; помрачение
distressing – *a* печальный, огорчительный
divine – *a* божественный
dizziness – *n* головокружение
doom – *n* рок, судьба
dotage – *n* старческое слабоумие, маразм
draught – *n* сквозняк
duty – *n* пошлина, налог
duvet – *n* пуховое одеяло

E

eau **de Cologne** – *n* одеколон
ebony – *n* черное дерево
eddy – *v* водоворот, воронка
ejaculate – *v* восклицать
elapse – *v* проходить, пролетать (о времени)
elope – *v* тайно сбежать; скрываться
emanation – *n* излучение, истечение
embroidery – *n* вышивка
emerald – *n* изумруд
emit – *v* извергать; издавать; выпускать (деньги)
endanger – *v* подвергать опасности
engulf – *v* поглощать, заглатывать
escape – *v* спасаться; ускользать; совершать побег
ewe – *n* овца
exclusive – *a* особенный; недоступный
execration – *n* проклятие
execute – *v* казнить; исполнять; выполнять
exertion – *n* напряжение
exigency – *n* тяжелое положение; острая необходимость
exploit – *n* подвиг, деяние
exuberance – *n* богатство; изобилие; избыток

F

fabric – *n* ткань, материал

fastidious – *a* разборчивый, брезгливый; утонченный, изощренный

fatigue – *n* утомление, усталость

fernery – *n* заросшее папоротником место

ferociously – *adv* яростно, свирепо

fervently – *adv* пылко, страстно

feud – *n* вражда, ссора, междоусобица

fidelity – *n* привязанность, верность

fidget – *v* ерзать

filament – *n* нить, волокно; крупица

flatter – *v* льстить

fluid – *n* жидкость

foray – *v* нападение, набег

foreboding – *n* предчувствие; плохое предсказание; знамение

forlorn – *a* покинутый; несчастный; безнадежный

fragrance – *n* благоухание, аромат

freckled – *a* веснушчатый

fretting – *n* раздражение; беспокойство

frothy – *a* пенистый, пенный

furbish – *v* чистить, полировать

fuse – *n* плавка

G

gaunt – *a* худой; суровый, мрачный
gem – *n* драгоценный камень
generality – *n* обобщение; большинство; неопределенность
generation – *n* поколение
ghost – *n* призрак, привидение
girth – *n* подпруга
glory – *n* слава
gnaw – *v* грызть, глодать
governess – *n* гувернантка
grating – *n* решетка; сетка
grievous – *a* скорбный, печальный
grisly – *a* суеверный, вызывающий ужас
gypsy – *n* цыган(ка)
gyve – *n* оковы, кандалы

H

hamlet – *n* деревушка
harness – *n* сбруя, упряжь
haunt – *n* призрак, привидение
haunted – *a* посещаемый привидениями
havoc – *n* опустошение, разорение
hazard – *n* опасность, риск
haze – *n* легкий туман, дымка
hearse – *n* катафалк
heirloom – *n* фамильная собственность
heptagon – *n* семиугольник
horticulture – *n* садоводство
hot-bed *n* постель; брачное ложе
hot-box *n* исповедальня
hubbub – *n* шум, гам, гул
humbug – *n* обман, жульничество

I

imp – *n* чертенок, бесенок
impel – *v* принуждать; приводить в движение
impendency – *n* нависшая угроза, неизбежность
impersonation – *n* подражание
impregnated – *a* пропитанный
impunity – *n* безнаказанность
incarnation – *n* воплощение, олицетворение
incessant – *a* беспрестанный, непрерывный
incline – *v* склоняться, клониться
indebted – *a* должный, находящийся в долгу
indent – *n* выемка, зазубрина
indisposition – *n* недомогание; нежелание
induce – *v* побуждать, убеждать
inexorable – *a* непреклонный, неумолимый
inextinguishable – *a* неугасимый
ingratiating – *a* обворожительный
inhale – *v* вдыхать, втягивать
inquiry – *n* запрос; вопрос
insane – *a* безумный
insatiable – *a* ненасытный
instep – *n* подъем (ноги)
insufficiency – *n* нехватка
intrusion – *n* вторжение
inveterate – *a* продолжительный, долгий
iridescent – *a* переливчатый
irreconcilable – *a* непримиримый
itinerant – *a* переезжающий с места на место
ivory – *n* слоновая кость

J

jealousy – *n* ревность
jewel – *n* драгоценность

K

kidnap – *v* похищать, брать в заложники
knoll – *n* холмик; бугорок

L

lantern – *n* фонарь
lass – *n* девушка
laud – *n* похвала
laundry – *n* прачечная; стирка
legacy – *n* наследство
lettuce – *n* салат-латук
lightning – *n* молния
linger – *v* медлить, задерживаться
lizard – *n* ящерица
log – *n* бревно; чурбан
lump – *n* ком, глыба; кусок
lustrous – *a* блестящий
luxury – *n* роскошь

M

malice – *n* злоба
malignant – *a* злобный
marsh – *n* болото, топь
masterpiece – *n* шедевр
mate – *n* товарищ, напарник
meager – *a* чахлый; изнуренный; скудный
menace – *n* опасность; угроза
midge – *n* комар; мошка
mignonette – *n* резеда
misty – *a* туманный
money-lender *n* ростовщик
morbid – *a* отвратительный; нездоровый
mortal – *a* смертный
mortification – *n* досада, огорчение
mosque – *n* мечеть
motto – *n* девиз
mournful – *a* печальный; траурный
muffler – *n* теплый шарф
muster – *v* сбор, смотр
mute – *a* немой; молчаливый

N

nap – *n* короткий сон
necklace – *n* ожерелье
nocturnal – *a* ночной
nuisance – *n* неприятность; досада

O

oak – *n* дуб
oath – *n* клятва; присяга
obliterate – *v* удалять; стирать
oblong – *a* прямоугольный; продолговатый
obsolete – *a* устаревший
onerous – *a* тягостный, затруднительный
opulence – *n* богатство, изобилие
orphan – *n* сирота
outcast – *n* изгой, отверженный
overcast – *a* мрачный, хмурый

P

pagan – *a* языческий
palate – *n* нёбо; вкус, склонность
pandemonium – *n* преисподняя, ад
pantry – *n* кладовая, чуланчик для продуктов
parish – *n* церковный приход
patois – *n* говор, местное наречие
peerage – *n* знать; звание пэра
pellet – *n* шарик, катышек
peradventure – *n* сомнения, неуверенность
perambulation – *n* ходьба, прогулка
peril – *n* опасность
perseverance – *n* упорство, настойчивость
pertinacious – *a* упрямый, неуступчивый
perverse – *a* развращенный, испорченный
pewter – *n* оловянная посуда
phantasmata – *n* призрак, фантом
phial – *n* пузырек, бутылочка
placard – *n* объявление; афиша
plead – *v* просить, умолять
pliability – *n* гибкость; податливость
plowboy – *n* деревенский парень
poignancy – *n* острота; резкость, мучительность
poison – *n* яд; *v* отравить
pommel – *n* головка; ручка
ponderously – *adv* нескладно; нудно
prayer – *n* молитва
prearranged – *a* заранее запланированный
precaution – *n* предосторожность
precincts – *n* окрестности
precipitate – *v* рухнуть; торопить, подгонять
preposterous – *a* нелепый
prevalence – *n* преобладание; сила, господство
priest – *n* священник
priggish – *a* скрупулезный, педантичный
propensity – *n* склонность
prophecy – *n* пророчество
prophet – *n* пророк
pumpkin – *n* тыква
pursuit – *n* преследование, погоня

Q

quagmire – *n* трясина, болото
quaint – *a* причудливый, затейливый
querulous – *a* капризный

R

radiance – *n* сияние
rapture – *n* восхищение, восторг
receptacle – *n* хранилище
reconcile – *v* мирить; примирять(ся)
recount – *v* рассказывать, излагать
refinement – *n* утонченость
regiment – *n* полк
regret – *v* сожалеть; огорчаться
reins – *n pl* вожжи
relapse – *n* повторение
remedy – *n* лекарство, средство
remnant – *n* остаток; остатки
reprehensibly – *adv* с осуждением; предосудительно
resignation – *n* отставка; смирение, покорность
resplendent – *a* сверкающий, блестящий
reverberate – *v* многократно повторяться
reverently – *adv* почтительно
rival – *n* соперник
rivalry – *n* соперничество, конкуренция
roam – *v* бродить, скитаться
robust – *a* здоровый, крепкий
roost – *n* курятник, насест
rural – *a* сельский
rustic – *a* деревенский
rusty – *a* ржавый

S

sable – *n* соболь
sacrifice – *n* жертва; *v* жертвовать
saliva – *n* слюна
sanity – *n* здравомыслие; психическое здоровье
savour – *n* привкус, вкус; оттенок
scarecrow – *n* пугало, чучело
scarlet **fever** *n* скарлатина
scent – *n* аромат
scorn – *n* пренебрежение, презрение
scuffle – *n* драка, потасовка
seduce – *v* соблазнять; совращать
sequestered – *a* уединенный; изолированный
serenity – *n* ясность, прозрачность
sermon – *n* проповедь
shabby – *a* потрепанный, поношенный
shibboleth – *n* пережиток прошлого; предрассудок
shovel – *n* лопата
skirmishing – *n* перестрелка, стычка
slavery – *n* рабство
small-fry *n* мелкая сошка
smooth – *v* сглаживать; улаживать
sob – *v* всхлипывать, рыдать
solicitude – *n* беспокойство; забота, попечение
solitary – *a* уединенный; одинокий
somber – *a* мрачный; унылый
somnolence – *n* сонливость; дремота
somnolent – *a* убаюкивающий, усыпляющий
sophisticated – *a* умудренный; утонченный; изощренный
spidery – *a* паукообразный
spine – *n* позвоночник
spiritually – *adv* духовно, ментально
squirrel – *n* белка
stable – *n* стойло; конюшня
starch – *v* крахмал
stealthy – *a* скрытный; незаметный
stifle – *v* душить
stirrup – *n* стремя
stuff – *v* набивать, начинять; засовывать
subversive – *a* подрывной; крамольный
superstition – *n* суеверие
supplication – *n* мольба, просьба

suspend – *v* вешать; приостанавливать, откладывать
swain – *n* сельский житель

T

taciturn – *a* молчаливый
tantamount – *a* равносильный; равноценный
tapestry – *n* гобелен; декоративная ткань
tease – *v* дразнить; домогаться; выпрашивать
termination – *n* окончание; итог, исход
testimonial – *n* рекомендация; награда
tether – *n* привязь
thump – *n* тяжелый удар
timothy – *n бот.* тимофеевка луговая
tincture – *n* настойка
tombstone – *n* надгробие
topsy-turvy *a* беспорядочный; перевернутый вверх дном
transaction – *n* сделка, соглашение
transcend – *v* превосходить; превышать
transpire – *v* обнаруживать; прояснять
tribe – *n* племя; клан, род
trinket – *n* безделушка
trumpery – *n* ерунда
turquoise – *n* бирюза
twinkle – *n* мигание

U

uncouth – *a* неотесанный, грубый
unfathomable – *a* бездонный; непонятный, непостижимый
unmolested – *a* оставленный в покое, в безопасности
upset **(upset, upset)** – *v* огорчать, расстраивать
urchin – *n* оборванец (о ребенке); еж
utter – *a* полный, абсолютный, крайний

V

vacuous – *a* пустой
valuation – *n* оценка; мнение
vapour – *n* пар; испарение
vaulted – *a* сводчатый
veil – *n* вуаль; завеса; покров
vermilion – *n* киноварь; алый цвет
vest – *v* жилет; безрукавка
vexed – *a* раздосадованный; мучительный
vicinity – *n* близость; окрестности
vigour – *n* жизненная энергия, сила
voluptuous – *a* чувственный; роскошный

W

wag – *v* колебаться, качаться
warrior – *n* воин; боец
wayward – *a* своенравный; непредсказуемый; сбившийся с пути
wealthy – *a* богатый; состоятельный
weird – *a* странный; потусторонний; роковой
whim – *n* каприз; прихоть, причуда
whippersnapper – *n* ничтожество; сопляк
whirligig – *n* волчок, юла
whiz – *v* пролететь с шумом; промчаться; просвистеть
wholesome – *a* полезный; здоровый; благотворный
wicked – *a* злобный; безнравственный
wire – *v* телеграфировать, отправлять; *n* телеграмма
withered – *a* увядший; иссохший
withstand **(withstood, withstood)** – *v* выдержать; устоять
wizard – *n* колдун, волшебник; знахарь
wounded – *a* раненый
wretched – *a* жалкий, несчастный; ужасный

Y

yodel – *v* петь йодль (напев альпийских горцев)

notes

Примечания

1

Hades – Аид, в древнегреческой мифологии – подземное царство мертвых.

2

The Mississippi River – крупнейшая река в Северной Америке; Миссисипи вместе с притоком Миссури является самой длинной рекой в мире.

3

New England – Новая Англия, регион на северо-востоке США, включающий в себя шесть штатов; назван так капитаном Смитом в 1614 г.

4

Midas – Мидас, в греко-римской мифологии – царь Фригии, известный своей глупостью и жадностью.

5

Boston – Бостон, город в США на северо-восточном побережье Атлантики в заливе Массачусетс.

6

Chicago – Чикаго, крупный город на северо-западе штата Иллинойс.

7

Victorian – викторианский, относящийся к стилю в искусстве, архитектуре, литературе времен королевы Виктории (1837–1901).

8

Preparatory school – в США – частная школа, в которой учеников готовят к поступлению в колледж.

9

The Ritz Carlton Hotel – роскошный отель «Ритц-Карлтон». Сезар Ритц (1850–1918) создал сеть отелей, включая отель «Ритц» в Париже (1898) и «Ритц-Карлтон» в Лондоне (1906).

10

Montana – штат в США на границе с Канадой.

11

Brakeman – в США – тормозной кондуктор на железной дороге.

12

Protagonist – главное действующее лицо в пьесе, литературном произведении или реальном жизненном событии.

13

The Montana Rockies – Скалистые горы на западе штата Монтана, район высоких горных вершин и глубоких ущелий.

14

Croesus – Крез (VI век до н. э.), последний царь Лидии, древнего государства в Малой Азии; Крез славился своим несметным богатством, и позднее его имя стало символом богатства.

15

Château – дворец или замок, расположенный в сельской местности.

16

Acciaccare – музыкальный термин, обозначающий короткий, сжатый, форсированный звук.

17

Рококо – изысканный стиль в искусстве и архитектуре XVIII в.

18

Titania – Титания, персонаж комедии У. Шекспира «Сон в летнюю ночь»; напоминает Геру, верховную богиню в греческой мифологии.

19

Platonic – имеющий отношение к Платону (428 до н. э.–348 до н. э.), одному из величайших древнегреческих философов, или к его учению.

20

The Adriatic Sea – Адриатическое море, часть Средиземного моря между Италией и Балканским полуостровом.

21

Piccolo – маленькая флейта, издающая нежный звук.

22

Virginian – имеющий отношение к Вирджинии, штату на Атлантическом побережье США, к югу от Вашингтона; штат назван в честь Елизаветы I Английской, королевы-девы (1533–1603).

23

George Washington – Джордж Вашингтон (1732–1799), главнокомандующий Американской революционной армией во время Гражданской войны в США в 1775–1783 гг. и первый президент Соединенных Штатов (1789–1797).

24

Lord Baltimore – Джордж Калверт, основатель первой Британской колонии в Мэриленде, к северу от Вирджинии; его сын Леонард Калверт (1606–1647) был первым губернатором колонии Мэриленд.

25

The Civil War – четырехлетняя Гражданская война (1861–1865) между федеральным правительством и штатами Юга, которые хотели выйти из Союза.

26

St. Paul – Сент-Пол, город на реке Миссисипи в штате Миннесота.

the Catskills – Катскилл, горы в США, часть горного массива Аппалачи к северо-западу от Нью-Йорка, штат Нью-Йорк.

28

Jersey – Нью-Джерси, один из тринадцати первых штатов на Атлантическом побережье США.

29

Long Island – Лонг-Айленд, остров в Атлантическом океане вблизи устья реки Гудзон на юге штата Нью-Йорк.

30

Proclamation – декларация, воззвание, официальное или публичное заявление.

31

Alias – вымышленное имя, которое человек использует в определенных случаях или для каких-либо целей.

32

The Babylonian Empire – Вавилон, древняя империя и очаг культуры в Месопотамии, территории между реками Тигр и Евфрат.

33

Bric-à-brac – безделушки, не имеющие особой ценности.

34

Nymph – нимфа, в греко-римской мифологии – божество, живущее в реках, лесах и т. д.; красивая молодая женщина (*перен.*).

35

Newport – Ньюпорт, город на юго-западе Род-Айленда, основанный в 1639 г.

36

Amnesia – амнезия, потеря памяти.

37

Wop – американское жаргонное уничижительное прозвище итальянцев.

38

Pro deo et patria et St. Midas – За Бога, отечество и Св. Мидаса (*лат.*; девиз).

39

The Balkans – Балканский полуостров, культурный и исторический регион Восточной Европы.

40

Serbian – имеющий отношение к Сербии, стране в центральной и западной части Балкан.

41

Empress Eugénie – императрица Евгения, жена Наполеона III (1808–1873), председателя Второй республики, а затем императора Франции.

42

West Virginia – Западная Вирджиния, маленький горный штат к востоку от реки Миссисипи, вошедший в состав США в 1863 г.

43

Omaha – Омаха, город на западном берегу реки Миссисипи на востоке штата Небраска.

44

Sioux City – Сиу-Сити, город, основанный в 1854 г. на реке Миссури, на северо-западе штата Айова.

45

Portico – галерея, портик; в архитектуре – пространство с колоннами, поддерживающими крышу над входом в здание.

46

Nemesis – Немезида, в греческой мифологии – богиня возмездия, олицетворяющая недовольство богов поступками людей; заслуженное и справедливое наказание (*перен.*).

Divinity – божество.

By golly! – Ну и ну! (*восклицание удивления*)

49

Rhinestones – разновидность горного хрусталя; камни, имитирующие бриллианты.

50

To cut me off with a hot coal – лишить наследства, оставить мало или совсем ничего (*идиома*).

51

Pomeranian – померанский шпиц, популярная порода карликовых собак.

52

The Alderney cows – порода молочных коров с Олдерни, британского острова в проливе Ла-Манш.

53

‘Orfeo’ – опера Кристофа Виллибальда Глюка (1714–1787) «Орфей и Эвридика», написанная в 1762 г.

54

Covent Garden – Ковент-Гарден, знаменитый Лондонский оперный театр.

55

Meyerbeer – Джакомо Мейербер (1791–1864), немецкий и французский композитор-романтик.

56

The Golden Age – XVIII в. в Британии, золотой век расцвета классического искусства.

57

The Ravogli – сестры Равольи, популярные оперные исполнительницы.

58

Orpheus – Орфей, главный персонаж оперы «Орфей и Эвридика»; в древнегреческой мифологии – легендарный герой, обладавший невероятным музыкальным даром.

59

Brighton – Брайтон, город и морской курорт на побережье Ла-Манша в графстве Сассекс, в 80 км от Лондона.

60

Chelsea – Челси, фешенебельный район в западной части Лондона, известный своими магазинами и дорогими особняками; район также имеет репутацию квартала художников.

61

Мария Магдалина (I век н. э.) – падшая женщина, излеченная Иисусом от семи бесов и ставшая его преданной последовательницей. Имя используется как нарицательное в значении «падшая женщина».

62

French window – французское окно: двустворчатое окно которое служит дверью на балкон или выходом в сад.

63

Имеется в виду знаменитый ипподром в Эпсоме, где ежегодно проводится Дерби и разыгрываются главные призы английской «Золотой короны» для скаковых и беговых лошадей.

Landau – ландо, четырехколесный экипаж со складной крышей.

Venus – Венера, в римской мифологии – богиня любви.

Steinberg Cabinet, Johannisberg – лучшие сорта белого рейнского вина.

67

Raphael – Рафаэль (1483–1520), знаменитый итальянский живописец и архитектор эпохи Возрождения, известный изображением мадонны.

Wagner – Рихард Вагнер (1813–1883), немецкий драматический композитор.

69

Beethoven – Людвиг ван Бетховен (1770–1827), выдающийся немецкий композитор периода между эпохами романтизма и классицизма.

70

Mozart – Вольфганг Амадей Моцарт (1756–1791), один из величайших композиторов в истории западной музыки.

71

Handel – Георг Фридрих Гендель (1685–1759), английский композитор немецкого происхождения периода позднего барокко.

72

Gluck – Кристоф Виллибальд Глюк (1714–1787), немецкий композитор, автор оперы «Орфей и Эвридика».

73

Schumann – Роберт Шуман (1810–1856), немецкий композитор-романтик, педагог и музыкальный критик.

74

Botticelli – Сандро Боттичелли (1445–1510), выдающийся итальянский художник эпохи Возрождения, представитель флорентийской школы живописи.

75

Milton – Джон Мильтон (1608–1674), английский поэт и мыслитель, автор знаменитой поэмы «Потерянный рай».

76

Tennyson – Альфред Теннисон (1809–1892), английский поэт Викторианской эпохи.

77

Titian – Тициан (1488–1576), величайший итальянский художник эпохи Возрождения, представитель венецианской школы.

78

Delilah – Далила, в Ветхом Завете – женщина, предавшая Самсона и раскрывшая секрет его силы; главный персонаж оперы Камиля Сен-Санса «Самсон и Далила».

79

‘Che farò’ – «Что делать мне?», ария Орфея из оперы «Орфей и Эвридика».

80

Putney – район в Лондоне на южном берегу Темзы.

81

Hyde Park – Гайд-парк, крупнейший парк в Лондоне, расположен в административном районе Вестминстер.

82

Kensington Gardens – Кенсингтонские сады, королевский парк вокруг Кенсингтонского дворца в Лондоне.

83

Make hay while the sun shines. – Куй железо, пока горячо (*идиома*).

84

The High Street – торговая улица в Кенсингтоне, фешенебельном районе в центре Лондона.

85

Hammersmith – административный район на западе Лондона, расположенный на левом берегу реки Темзы, к западу от Челси.

86

Burgundy – бургундское, красное сухое вино из района Бургундия во Франции.

87

Richmond Park – Ричмонд-парк, пейзажный парк на юго-западе Лондона.

88

The siege of Strasbourg – пятидесятидневная осада Страсбурга, города на западе Франции, немецкими войсками в ходе Франко-прусской войны 1870–1871 гг.

89

Холли! В самом деле! Что вы… Что же вы делаете! Танцевать! В воскресенье! Прекратите же! (*фр.*)

90

Cleopatra – Клеопатра (69–30 до н. э.), царица Египта; после завоевания Египта римской армией покончила с собой.

91

Socrates – Сократ (470–399 до н. э.), один из величайших древнегреческих философов, чьи идеи и принципы оказали глубокое влияние на развитие философии.

92

Codicil – кодицил, дополнительное распоряжение к завещанию, изменяющее или корректирующее какую-либо его часть.

93

Sal volatile – раствор нюхательных смесей, применяемых при обмороках и потере сознания.

Marguerite – Маргарита, героиня драмы Иоганна Вольфганга Гете «Фауст» и одноименной оперы Шарля Гуно.

95

Mephisto – Мефистофель, один из главных героев драмы «Фауст»; литературный персонаж, падший ангел, придуманный в традициях магии и демонологии анонимным автором в 1587 г.

96

Waterloo – вокзал Ватерлоо, крупная железнодорожная станция в Лондоне, к югу от Темзы, один из 13 главных лондонских вокзалов.

Victoria – легкий экипаж на двоих.

Jubey – зд. чудесный.

99

‘Carmen’ – «Кармен», одна из самых популярных опер всех времен, написанная французским композитором Жоржем Бизе (1838–1875).

100

Habanera – хабанера, всемирно известная ария из оперы «Кармен».

101

The Hudson – Гудзон, река и залив в штате Нью-Йорк; названы в честь Генри Гудзона, английского мореплавателя начала XVII в.

102

The Tappan Zee – часть реки Гудзон на западном берегу, где река расширяется и образует подобие озера.

103

St. Nicholas – Святитель Николай (III–IV вв.), один из самых почитаемых христианских святых, архиепископ Мир Ликийских, города в Малой Азии.

104

Greensburgh – Гринбург, город на реке Гудзон на северо-востоке штата Нью-Йорк.

105

Tarry Town – Тарритаун, поселение в городской черте Гринбурга.

106

The Sabbath – день отдыха (у христиан – воскресенье).

107

Glen – узкая горная долина.

108

Sleepy Hollow – Сонная лощина, небольшое поселение к северу от Тарритауна.

109

Powwows – собрания североамериканских индейских племен.

110

Hendrick Hudson – Генри Гудзон (ок. 1565–1611), английский мореплаватель и исследователь, пытавшийся открыть путь из Европы в Азию через Северный Ледовитый океан.

111

Hessian trooper – гессенский солдат: наемные немецкие солдаты находились на английской службе.

112

Connecticut – маленький штат на северо-востоке США, один из шести штатов Новой Англии.

113

Psalmody – 1. пение псалмов (религиозных гимнов); 2. сборник псалмов.

114

By hook or by crook – всеми правдами и неправдами, не мытьем, так катаньем (идиома).

115

Cotton Mather – Коттон Мэзер (1663–1728), пастор, американский религиозный деятель и автор, веривший в существование колдовства, изучавший этот вопрос и писавший о нем.

116

Saardam – Зандам или Саардам, город по берегам реки Зан на западе Нидерландов.

117

Kentucky – штат на юге США на границе с Вирджинией; в 1792 г. Кентукки стал пятнадцатым штатом Союза.

118

Tennessee – штат к югу от Кентукки; первые европейцы прибыли в этот регион в 1540 г.

piazza (*ит.*) – веранда (*амер.*)

120

Herculean – очень сильный и могучий (букв. Геркулесов).

121

Mercury – Меркурий, в римской мифологии – бог и покровитель торговли.

122

Colt – кольт, тип револьвера, изобретенный Сэмюэлем Кольтом (1814–1862), американским производителем оружия.

123

Mynheer (*голланд.*) – вежливое обращение к человеку голландского происхождения, соответствующее английским Mister, Sir.

124

Коек – разновидность выпечки.

125

Cruller – печенье «хворост».

126

St. Vitus – Святой Вит, христианский святой, который, по преданию, помогал в лечении неврологических заболеваний, сопровождающихся непроизвольным сокращением мышц (так называемая пляска Святого Вита).

127

Frigate – фрегат, быстроходный военный парусный корабль.

128

Heretical – еретический, не совпадающий с общепризнанным мнением, верованием или убеждением.

129

Goblin – гоблин, в западноевропейской мифологии – злобный дух в виде человекоподобного создания, живущий под землей и не переносящий солнечного света.

Pillion – заднее сидение для второго седока позади всадника.

131

Tête-à-tête – разговор наедине (обычно конфиденциальный).

Psalm – псалом, религиозный гимн.

133

Corduroy – вельвет.

134

King’s College – Королевский колледж, основанный в 1441 г. королем Генрихом VI, один из колледжей Кембриджского университета.

135

Cambridge – Кембриджский университет, основанный в 1209 г., один из старейших и крупнейших в Англии.

136

Newport – Ньюпорт, город и порт на реке Северн в Уэльсе; впервые упоминается в 1126 г.

137

Achilles – Ахиллес, в греческой мифологии – герой Троянской войны, единственным уязвимым местом которого была пятка.

138

Cheshire – Чешир, графство в северо-западной Англии.

139

Eton – престижная частная британская школа для мальчиков, основанная в 1440 г. королем Генрихом VI.

140

The Stars and the Stripes – «звезды и полосы» – название национального флага США, состоящего из звезд, символизирующих количество штатов на данный момент, и тринадцати полос по числу первоначальных штатов.

141

Ascot – Аскот, населенный пункт в 40 км от Лондона, в графстве Беркшир, где проходят ежегодные скачки.

142

Tudor hall – холл эпохи Тюдоров, королевской династии, правившей Англией в XV–XVII вв.

143

Cheroot – сорт тонких сигар с обрезанными концами.

144

Fanny Davenport – Фанни Дэвенпорт, (1850–1898) популярная американская актриса XIX в.

145

Sara Bernhardt – Сара Бернар (1844–1923), великая французская актриса, легендарная фигура в истории театра.

146

The Fourth Dimension of Space – четвертое измерение; мы живем в трехмерном пространстве, а в четвертом измерении, по преданию, обитают сверхъестественные существа.

147

Voltaire – Вольтер (1694–1778), один из величайших французских философов и писателей.

148

Charles James Fox (1749–1806) – Чарльз Джеймс Фокс, британский политик, реформатор и гуманист.

149

The Free American Reformed Episcopalian Church – Свободная американская реформированная епископальная церковь, одна из протестантских церквей.

150

Titan – Титан, в древнегреческой мифологии – гигант, один из детей Неба и Земли.

151

Chanticleer = петух (*фр.*); петух Шантеклер – персонаж средневековой литературы, сказок и басен.

152

Arquebuse – аркебуза, изобретенное в XV в. в Испании ружье, из которого стреляли с плеча.

153

Benedictine – бенедиктинец, член монашеского ордена св. Бенедикта (480–547), основателя первого монастыря и родоначальника монашеской традиции в Западном христианстве.